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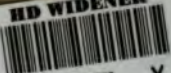
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AND STYLE

HARDRESS O'GRADY

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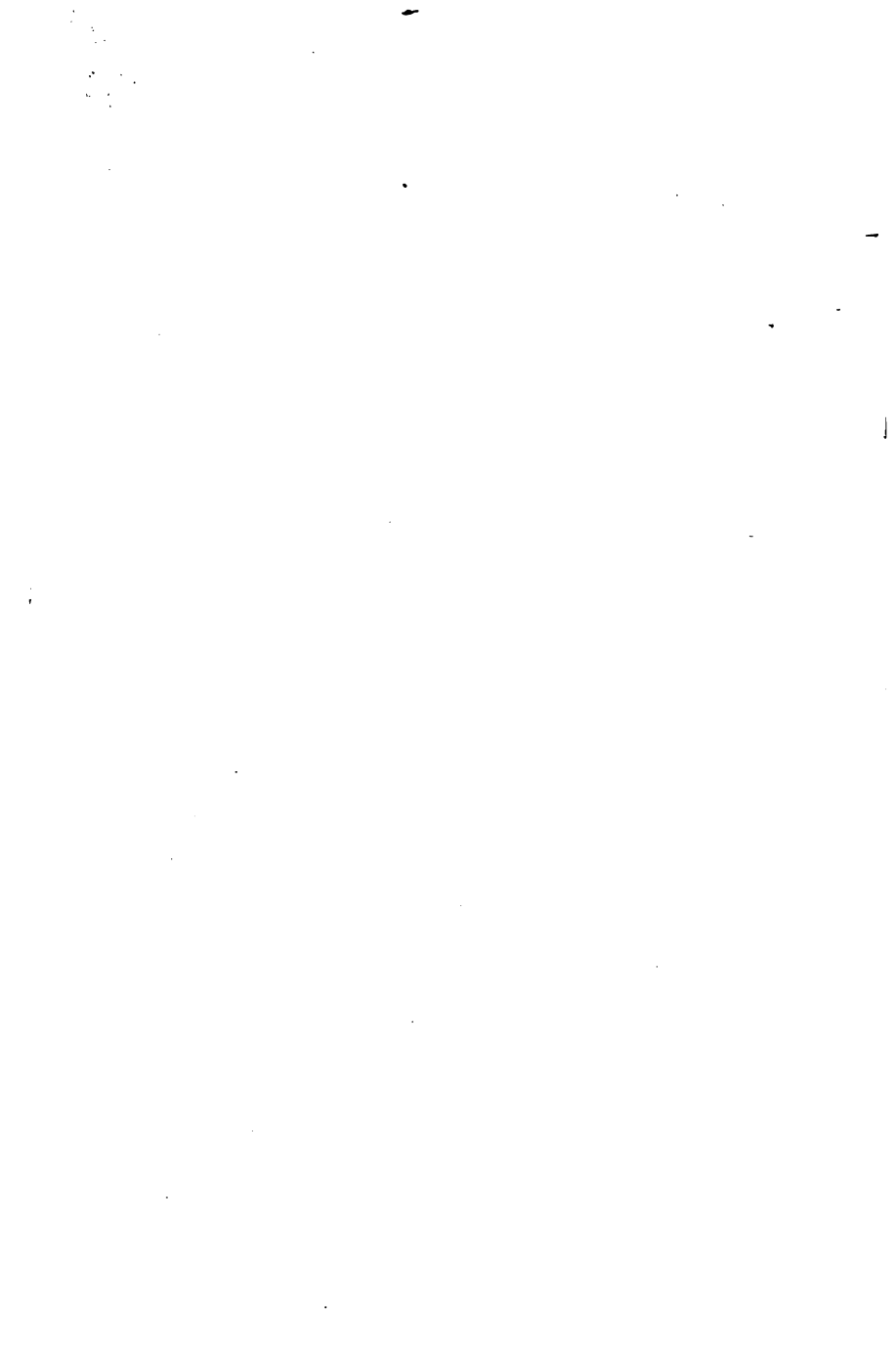


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MATTER, FORM, AND STYLE

A MANUAL OF PRACTICE IN THE
WRITING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

BY HARDRESS O'GRADY

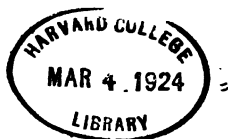
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Five money

TO M. E. AND M. H. SADLER
THIS SOMETHING MORE THAN A MERE
TEXTBOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
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PREFACE

THIS book does not pretend to teach the teacher his business. On the contrary, I have always borne in mind the fact that in the last resort it is the personal relation between the lecturer, master, or mistress, and the pupil, which tells in the teaching of composition. So far as details are concerned, points of grammar and of syntax, the use of metaphor and trope, it is difficult to see how anything can be done by the impersonal author of a book.

But I may be allowed to emphasize here the principle which has guided me—namely, that in all forms of composition it is with the mass that one should begin at first, gradually paying more attention to the details of form and style. I have felt that many methods of teaching were doomed to failure because they took the component parts of a subject first, each part separately, so that the pupil could “not see the wood for the trees.” Whereas it would appear more human and humane to get first the creative act, and then shape the thing created.

Teachers will, I think, find this book a help in the weekly work of English composition. The exercises are ample, and cover a wide ground; but in order to make the book still more useful, blank pages have been bound in whereon further suggestions, notes, and exercises may be set down.

Mr. P. J. Hartog's book, “The Writing of English.”

has, I hope I may say, inspired me with the ideal at which I have aimed. Those who have not read his work will find in it, not only a luminous treatment of the subject and many suggestions, but also those manifestations of personality upon which I have laid so much stress. Mr. Hartog has laid me under a great obligation by reading the proofs. It is a matter of real regret to me that the printing was too far advanced to permit of certain alterations being made. I have acknowledged elsewhere the kind permission to print long copyright extracts from the writings of Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. M. T. H. Sadler. To Miss M. L. Hart, to Mr. W. T. Young, and to Mr. J. Dover Wilson, I am indebted for criticisms or suggestions. To Miss F. M. Purdie, Head-Mistress of the Sydenham L.C.C. Secondary School for Girls, I can but weakly express my gratitude for many days of patient and illuminating labour. To her and to other friends I have, in the French fashion, inscribed certain chapters.

The thanks of the publishers and author are due to Messrs. Chatto and Windus and to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., for permission to print extracts from Robert Louis Stevenson and Walter Pater respectively. Finally, I wish to express my very real gratitude to Mr. R. B. Lattimer, Mr. Murray's educational editor, for his constant help.

It is certain that writing may be learnt by practice, by criticism, and by precept, and it is my hope that this book will, with the invaluable co-operation of the class master or mistress, go to increase the quality of prose written in English.

HARDRESS O'GRADY.

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MATTER, FORM, AND STYLE

CHAPTER I

SINCERITY IN WRITING

WRITING, good writing, becomes more essential to men and women every day. No man or woman who is ambitious to excel in any branch of life, who wishes to carry out some scheme of reform or to realize some long-cherished ideal, can afford to despise the power to write vividly and simply. Even the uncultured person whose sole desire is to make money has the wit to surround himself with well-educated secretaries, who can put his gross thoughts into courteous, yet direct and effective, language. But the man who depends upon another to write his letters for him has delivered himself over to a form of slavery.

Writing should be a clarifier of thought ; it may be compared to a magnifying-glass by which our reasoning stands out clearly, our descriptions become pictures, so that the confused images and conceptions and thought-currents may be forced to take on a human shape. For thought is like that old man of the sea, Proteus, who changed his shape ever and ever, until one learnt the secret by which he must show himself in his true form. Or, again, thought is often like the *djinn* in the brass bottle of the Arabian tales—dim, indistinct, and nothing worth until the stopper is removed and it expands, powerful and immense, clearly defined against the midnight sky.

And it may be that to teach a pupil to write clearly and well, sincerely, as he feels and thinks, is to train him to greater kindness. For the vast majority of civilized human beings (the uncivilized have no such faults) are not mean-spirited, self-centred, cold and formal, because it is their nature, but for this reason rather, that the growth of *city* life, which is *civilization*, has made them beware and be afraid of others and of themselves. Let them only learn to write or say aloud the truth which is in them, and they will find, as by a stroke of magic, an audience of kindly listeners and, indeed, friends. I, who never met Robert Louis Stevenson, love him because he wrote from Vailima those self-revealing, honest letters to a London friend—because he wrote the “Essays of Travel” and “Memories and Portraits.” Gray is a man, not merely a writer, to me; and so it is with many more—they have put their own hearts into their volumes.

We do not ask you to write well, clearly, strongly, in balanced phrases and well-sounding words, because we suspect you are a genius, concealed and misunderstood, but because we know the human that is in you, and believe that you will be happier, increase the circle of your friendships, and better realize yourself, your aims and your ideals, if you can carve out clearly and in high relief all that lies hidden in your mind.

So that writing and oral composition and conversation and debate are all parts of the same thing—human self-expression—helping one another greatly. Writing, however, because it is a slower, slightly more mechanical means of expression, demands and gives more time for patient rethinking. For that reason it becomes more nearly a work of art. And the measures of a work of art are life, proportion, balance, perspective, relief, sincerity,

action, decorative value and colour. These things, reduced to three words, are matter, form, and style.

Let us take these points in order.

Although the form and style be excellent, there can be no good writing if the subject-matter is unreal to the writer. No man can write honestly about subjects of which he has no experience. His comments will strike the reader as unreal, affected, or priggish, or they will be mere imitations of some author read shortly before the work was done. So we must first choose subjects with which the writer is familiar. Best of all, they should be parts of his own experiences, events which have happened within the last two or three days, or the last year, or some event in the past which made a vivid impression at the time. We make our first point, then. Form and style are essential for the proper presentation of the subject, to interest the reader, to please him, and to keep his attention to the end. But form and style are of no avail if there is no *reality* in the subject-matter. Therefore the subject must be alive to the writer, it must be important to him, for otherwise it will not live and become important to the reader. The subjects of all forms of good writing must come from within the life of the writer.

It is proposed here to work the actual writing-down of such experiences parallel with exercises intended to give ease in the recombining of sentences. But we will begin with some composition.

NARRATIVE EXERCISES.

I.

Write twenty to thirty lines (200 to 300 words) on as many of the following subjects as you are told to do. Do not mind the subjects being so simple. Gray wrote

about a churchyard, Cowper about a man whose horse ran away with him, Goldsmith about a cat, jealousy, and a mad dog, Stevenson about digging in his garden and chasing pigs out of it. There is no such thing as a "childish" subject in the world. You will note that no rules or directions have been given to you. In this first exercise you may make many mistakes. The comparison of these with the suggestions given later will afford you food for reflection.

1. You were out for a walk yesterday, on your way, it may be, to your school or college. Something amused you or aroused your attention. What was it? Make the description as real as possible.
2. Have you ever hung up under a tree coco-nuts for the tomtits? If so, give a description of the results.
3. How does spring-cleaning affect you? Why do people clean in the spring? Describe any spring-cleaning of which you have a vivid recollection.
4. Have you ever had to deal with an adder? If so, describe your adventure.
5. Have you ever seen a Bank Holiday crowd anywhere? Describe it, making one event stand out more clearly than the rest.
6. Have you ever witnessed any function when royalty has been present? Describe it.
7. Describe the last exciting football match, cricket match, hockey match, tennis match, or basket-ball match in which you took part, or in which you were interested. Best of all, give the reasons for your interest in it, and pick out the most exciting incidents in it. Consider that your reader may never have played anything more lively than hop-scotch or ninepins.
8. Describe a scene at a dock or in a dockyard if you have seen one.
9. Describe any picnic in which you took part, and any incidents which struck you as odd. [It is very difficult to be funny. Do not try!]
10. If you have ever been present at a railway accident, a tramway smash, or indeed any accident, describe it. Do not indulge in gruesome details unless you can do so without shocking your reader's good taste.
11. Have you ever seen an aeroplane flight or the flight of a dirigible balloon? If so, describe it.

Let us suppose you have written your narrative. How did you set about it? Did you try to remember as much as you could about the event you had chosen, and then write it down as quickly as possible? Or did you make a list on a separate sheet of paper of the various events, and rearrange them in their proper order of sequence? Or did you—and this is better still—ask yourself, after you had arranged them in their proper order, which of all the events might well be left out, and which must absolutely remain? Let us take an example from my own experiences in South Africa.

I will jot down my memories just as they occur to me:
I.—Fear of Zulu rebellion—Zulus restive—some insolent—I had never hit a Zulu—blood-poisoning from hitting Zulus—fetch a stick—the face of my Zulu servant—the butcher-boy—take off your cap—Susa Skoggo—refusal—my wife in garden and very nervous—the eyes of that Zulu—took off his cap—I was ill at the time and pretty weak.

Now, supposing I wrote my narrative just as it had occurred to me, this is the kind of thing that would have happened :

II.—When I was in Natal in 1905 there was a very general fear of a native rebellion. The Zulus, for various reasons, were very restive, and there had been many cases of insolence on the part of native servants to their masters. Although I had been in Natal for two years, I had always made a point of never hitting a native for any reason whatever, and I remembered being told never to do so with my naked fist, as I should probably get blood-poisoning if I did.

[My next note makes it impossible for me to go on reasonably. Why should I tell anyone to fetch a stick? I am forced to jump two notes and get to the butcher-

boy. But, as I write, I find my notes are insufficient. I must add to them, "Back-garden," and I am forced to bring up the note about my wife being in the back-garden.]

I was reading in the house, when I heard my wife, who was working in the back-garden, call out to me. I went to her, and found that she was telling a Zulu butcher- "boy" to take off his cap. He had refused, and was glaring at her. At once I said in kitchen-Kafir, "Susa skoggo" (Take off your cap). Again he refused, and as he was a giant, and looked furious, I felt pretty uncomfortable. I turned to my servant, and told him to fetch my stick, intending to thrash the man if he refused; but before Nk̄aishan returned, the cap was off, and the incident was over. I was ill at the time and rather weak, which made me nervous.

I have written very much as I think an untrained person would write. Let us criticize the performances.

[Remember that at present we are considering only certain broad, elementary points, and not form or style to any extent.]

In the first place, are you satisfied with the sequence of statements? Would you, on second thoughts, put the remark about being ill and nervous at the very end of the story? If not, where would you put it, to bring out its full importance?

Secondly, is there anything excessive or unnecessary in the narrative? Do you not think the remembering of a warning about blood-poisoning might easily go? Has it much to do with the story? If you wish to retain it, where would you put it, to bring out its significance?

Thirdly, why should my wife insist upon the man taking off his cap? In England there would certainly be a breach of the peace if one told certain people

to do so. This requires explanation for the general reader. It is not explained. That is a fault.

Out of this discussion, upon which you can easily improve and enlarge, we get one fact:

WRITING IS A SELECTIVE PROCESS.

Everything must not go down, but every explanation or description necessary to make the story reasonable and alive must be put in.

I could have made my narrative a great deal worse. I could have expatiated on the weather, the book I was reading, and the particular insect my wife was destroying. On the other hand, I can improve it by little descriptive touches. That will be for Stage IV. At present I wish merely to rearrange Stage II.

III.—When I was in Natal in 1905 there was a very general fear of a native rebellion. The Zulus, for various reasons, were very restive, and there had been many cases of insolence on the part of native servants to their masters. At the time of which I write I was just recovering from an illness. I was still weak, and unusually nervous. One day, when I was reading in the house, I heard my wife call out to me. She had been working in the back-garden, but I found her by the kitchen-door. She was telling a Zulu butcher—"boy" to take off his cap, and he, to my astonishment, refused. Only a few Kafir servants of tradesmen ever wore hats or caps, and generally these few were not of the best character. But, in any case, they knew it was part of the discipline which existed in the country between the governing whites and the governed natives to take off the cap or hat when speaking to a European, so that this man's refusal was an act of deliberate insolence.

Now, in spite of contrary advice from Colonial friends, I had never under any circumstances hit a native. But the imminence of a rebellion, and the

fact that magistrates had urged citizens to keep a tight hand on their servants, made me consider whether I ought not now to thrash him. I told him to take off his cap—"Susa skoggo," I said. He refused, and glared at me. He was a gigantic fellow, obviously a ruffian (as Zulu butcher-boys often become from meat-eating), and I was very nervous. I turned to my servant, Nkaishan, and told him to fetch a stick, as I remembered a warning that blood-poisoning often followed upon hitting a Zulu with one's naked fist. My "boy" ran off to do my bidding, but before he returned the Zulu had taken off his cap and the incident was over.

Now, even after this rearrangement, the story to me is flat and uninteresting. It lacks colour and movement and emotion [that is, feeling]. For that reason I will rewrite it, casting it in the form of an extract from a letter to a friend at home.

IV.— . . . The rather dull sequence of our life in this desolate town has been broken by an incident which might have made history. It needs very little to set a rebellion going when everyone has been preparing for it for months, and I came near to serious trouble the other day. You have heard how much the natives here object to the poll-tax. There are many other reasons for serious dissatisfaction among them, and a kind of political body called the Ethiopian Church has been exciting the young men to violence. Everybody in this township is anxious, many are terrified, for a rising successfully carried out would finish us off, though the troops might punish the Zulus after it was all over. Beside the anxiety, and the desire not to give any opportunity to natives for showing insubordination, my wretched illness has upset my nerves and made me unduly sensitive.

On Thursday afternoon I was reading in my study when my wife called me in a peculiar tone of voice. You may remember the description I gave you of the typical Natal bungalow, with the kitchen opening

directly on to the back-garden. It was from this direction my wife had called. I found her looking pale, but quite determined, in front of a gigantic Zulu. He was one of our butcher's men, who had brought round some meat from the shop. He looked furious, and my wife explained to me hurriedly that he had refused to take off his cap when he saw her. Out here it is part of the discipline of the life, a discipline one follows without much discussion, that natives who wear caps or hats should take them off when speaking to Europeans. This man had spoken insolently, and when told in the kitchen-Kafir we use to "Susa skoggo" (take off his headpiece), had deliberately refused.

At any other time I do not know what I should have done; probably I should have sent a note to the magistrate and to the man's employer—and, indeed, I did so later. But the temper of the natives, the prevailing anxiety, and the state of my nerves, made me act rather unwisely. I ordered the Zulu to take his hat off; he refused, and remained standing there. It was, as the local custom went, an act of deliberate insolence and defiance. Now, I had never struck a native, although Colonials had advised me to do so (but never with my fists, for fear of blood-poisoning*) for acts of insolence or disobedience. I am not sufficiently colonialized to strike servants yet,† but I lost my head and sent for a stick. My "boy" appeared to me to be away for an age, and during his absence the man and I stood and glared at one another, while my wife "stood by" for action. I think the fellow was wondering whether he should attack me or not. In any case, his bloodshot eyes and villainous face looked murder. However, he gave in, and just as the stick arrived he took off his cap and slunk away. You may think that I have made a good deal of this incident, but if the man had attacked me I have no doubt he would have killed me, and perhaps my wife. After that—flight. He would have gone straight

* This is not necessary; let us consider it as omitted.

† The best type of Colonials do not strike servants either.

to his kraal, and under the circumstances his tribe would probably have come out, armed, to resist his arrest. Zulus are passionate and impulsive, like other men, and their sense of personal dignity is not less keen because they are a subject nation.

It is always dangerous to attempt to set a model or to write one's own examples, and friendly critics regard this letter as "wordy and diffuse." It will be a good exercise for you to rewrite it more tersely, but without taking away from its clearness.

Let us read a few examples of narrative style by writers who have become famous or well known. These passages should be read aloud, and the reading should take into account—

1. The *pause* of the reader, NOT ONLY at the stops, but AT THE END OF EVERY COMPLETED PICTURE, thus :

An angel | *pause* | bearing a golden sword | *pause* | entered the dark room | *pause* | letting in a flood of silvery light | *stop* |.*

2. The *stressing* of the right word in each sense-group of words. Thus in the sentence given above it would be *wrong* to stress "bearing," "entered," "in," "flood."

Which words would it be right to stress ?

3. The raising or lowering of the pitch of one's voice to express emotion, and to bring out clearly the meaning of the writer.

READING ALOUD IS THE FINEST TEST THERE IS OF GOOD WRITING.

Whenever possible, read aloud all that you write.

I.—This is by R. L. Stevenson. It is taken from a book of *personal reminiscences*, "In the South Seas"†:

* Our gratitude is due to Mr. Burrell for introducing to us this elementary point made by M. Leçouvé.

† By kind permission of Messrs. Chatto and Windus.

. . . I have said that the funeral passed much as at home. But when all was over, when we were trooping in decent silence from the graveyard gate and down the path to the settlement, a sudden inbreak of a different spirit startled and perhaps dismayed us. Two people walked not far apart in our procession: my friend Mr. Donat — Donat - Rimarau, "Donat the much-handed"—acting Vice-Resident, present ruler of the archipelago, by far the man of chief importance on the scene, but known besides for one of an unshakable good-temper; and a certain comely, strapping young Paumotuan woman, the comeliest on the isle, not (let us hope) the bravest or the most polite. Of a sudden, ere yet the grave silence of the funeral was broken, she made a leap at the Resident, with pointed finger, shrieked a few words, and fell back again with a laughter, not a natural mirth. "What did she say to you?" I asked. "She did not speak to *me*," said Donat, a shade perturbed; "she spoke to the ghost of the dead man." And the purport of her speech was this: "See there! Donat will be a fine feast for you to-night." "Mr. Donat called it a jest," I wrote at the time in my diary. "It seemed to me more in the nature of a terrified conjuration, as though she would divert the ghost's attention from herself. A cannibal race may well have cannibal phantoms." The guesses of the traveller appear foredoomed to be erroneous; yet in these I was precisely right. The woman had stood by in terror at the funeral, being then in a dread spot, the graveyard. She looked on in terror to the coming night, with that ogre, a new spirit, loosed upon the isle. And the words she had cried in Donat's face were indeed a terrified conjuration, basely to shield herself, basely to dedicate another in her stead. One thing is to be said in her excuse: doubtless she partly chose Donat because he was a man of great good-nature, but partly, too, because he was a man of the half-caste. For I believe all natives regard white blood as a kind of talisman against the powers of hell. In no other way can they explain the unpunished recklessness of Europeans.

We are not concerned at present with the niceties and the details of *style*, nor even with those of *form*, except in so far as both form and style are necessary for the clear, living, simple presentation of the subject-matter.

Where did Stevenson get the material for this narrative? From his own life. Whose explanation of the woman's behaviour does he give? His own. Does he quote somebody else when he comments on her behaviour? No; he states his own feelings about her—"basely to shield herself, basely to dedicate another in her stead"—and because he feels strongly and honestly, those quite simple words *live* to me.

II.—This is an extract from "Cranford," by Mrs. Gaskell. Cranford is Knutsford, in Cheshire, where the author often went when she was a girl. Mr. E. V. Lucas says: "In all her books Mrs. Gaskell wrote occasionally very well, but technically 'Cranford' is better—and consistently better—than any. It has more delicacy, more atmosphere—in short, more style. This was particularly noticeable in *Household Words* [the magazine in which it appeared], where there was no style, only manner. *We may perhaps look for one cause in the circumstance that 'Cranford' is the record of impressions gathered in childhood.*"

Later on I will quote again from Mr. Lucas, to lay stress on the fact that Mrs. Gaskell was writing well because she wrote about things and persons *real to her*. The story extracted is about a cat that swallowed some valuable lace, and was given an emetic to make it return the property. Supposing you had to write the description, how would you handle it?

Write about a page on such an incident; then read it aloud. Then compare it with what follows. [A lady is speaking.]

. . . I treasure up my lace very much. I daren't even trust the washing of it to my maid. I always wash it myself. And once it had a narrow escape. Of course, your ladyship knows that such lace must never be starched or ironed. Some people wash it in sugar and water, and some in coffee, to make it the right yellow colour; but I myself have a very good receipt for washing it in milk, which stiffens it enough, and gives it a very good creamy colour. Well, ma'am, I had tacked it together (and the beauty of this fine lace is that, when it is wet, it goes into a very little space), and put it to soak in milk, when, unfortunately, I left the room. On my return, I found pussy on the table, looking very like a thief, but gulping very uncomfortably, as if she was half choked with something she wanted to swallow and could not. And, would you believe it? At first I pitied her, and said, "Poor pussy! poor pussy!" till all at once I looked and saw the cup of milk empty—cleaned out! "You naughty cat!" said I; and I believe I was provoked enough to give her a slap, which did no good, but only helped the lace down, just as one slaps a choking child on the back. I could have cried, I was so vexed; but I determined I would not give the lace up without a struggle for it. I hoped the lace might disagree with her, at any rate; but it would have been too much for Job if he had seen, as I did, that cat come in, quite placid and purring, not a quarter of an hour after, and almost expecting to be stroked. "No, pussy," said I, "if you have any conscience you ought not to expect that!" And then a thought struck me; and I rang the bell for my maid, and sent her to Mr. Hoggins, with my compliments, and would he be kind enough to lend me one of his top-boots for an hour? I did not think there was anything odd in the message; but Jenny said the young men in the surgery laughed as if they would be ill at my wanting a top-boot. When it came, Jenny and I put pussy in, with her fore-feet straight down, so that they were fastened, and could not scratch, and we gave her a teaspoonful of currant-

jelly in which (your ladyship must excuse me) I had mixed some tartar emetic. I shall never forget how anxious I was for the next half-hour. I took pussy to my own room, and spread a clean towel on the floor. I could have kissed her when she returned the lace to sight, very much as it had gone down. Jenny had boiling water ready, and we soaked it and soaked it, and spread it on a lavender-bush in the sun before I could touch it again, even to put it in milk. But now your ladyship would never guess that it had been in pussy's inside.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write down briefly the successive statements in the above story, numbering them. Begin, for instance, thus: (1) Value of the lace. (2) Washes it herself. (3) Introduces the story. (4) How to wash the lace; how *she* washes it; etc.

2. What was the reason for putting in the following sentences?—

(a) Of course, your ladyship knows that such lace must never be starched or ironed. (b) The beauty of this fine lace is that, when it is wet, it goes into a very little space. (c) Just as one slaps a choking child on the back. (d) I hoped the lace might disagree with her, at any rate. (e) But it would have been too much for Job if he had seen, as I did, that cat come in, quite placid and purring, not a quarter of an hour after, and almost expecting to be stroked. (f) I did not think there was anything odd in the message a top-boot.

3. (a) Copy out the story, omitting the sentences I have quoted. (b) *Read aloud* the two versions—first the one you have made, then Mrs. Gaskell's. What is the difference in the general effect?

The story goes home, it amuses us, because it is based upon personal experience and impressions. This is very important. Mr. Lucas quotes the Rev. Henry Green, of Knutsford, who, writing of a sick parishioner,

said: "I lent her 'Cranford' without telling her to what it was supposed to relate. She read the tale of 'Life in a Country Town,' and when I called again, she was full of eagerness to say, 'Why, sir, that "Cranford" is all about Knutsford! My old mistress, Miss Harker, is mentioned in it. . . .'"

And because Mrs. Gaskell felt all she wrote, and gave only honest narration of incidents experienced, or based upon varieties of experience, the story *lives*. That is the aim of writing: to make our written words *become alive to the reader*. In one of her letters, the author of "Cranford" said about another book: "I am so glad you liked 'Ruth.' I was so anxious about her, and took so much pains over writing it, that I lost my own power of judging, and could not tell whether I had done well or ill. I only knew how very close to my heart it had come from. I tried to make both the story and the writing as quiet as possible, in order that 'people' (my great bugbear) might not say that they could not see what the writer felt to be very plain and earnest truth for romantic incidents or exaggerated writing."

From that letter I will put in capitals for your guidance—"WHAT THE WRITER FELT TO BE VERY PLAIN AND EARNEST TRUTH."

Let me remind you that at present we are concerned with subject-matter. Good work in writing can only proceed from personal experience. There are two kinds of such experience: there are personal observations, things seen and heard and tasted and smelt and touched, but there are also strong inner emotions arising from personal liking, personal hate, admiration and contempt and surprise. First we have the outer happenings, which give rise in turn to the inner

emotions, and these, as the fruit of thinking and reflection, form our opinions. Let us, when dealing with subjects—that is, matter—follow this order; let us take—(1) Concrete happenings; (2) opinions about things, events, people.

Our third extract is from the book "Our Village," by Miss Mitford. This lady also wrote two tragedies which had some success in her day, but nobody acts them or reads them now—"Rienzi" and "Foscari." The reason is that there was effort and artificial thought in the plays, whereas "Our Village" is the fruit of experience, and that is why it has lived.

. . . Ah! they are gathering in the orchard harvest. Look at that young rogue in the old mossy apple-tree—that great tree, bending with the weight of its golden-rennets—see how he pelts his little sister beneath with apples as red and as round as her own cheeks, while she, with her outstretched frock, is trying to catch them, and laughing, and offering to pelt again as often as one bobs against her; and look at that still younger imp, who, as grave as a judge, is creeping on hands and knees under the tree, picking up the apples as they fall so deedly,* and depositing them so honestly in the great basket on the grass, already fixed so firmly and opened so widely, and filled almost to overflowing by the rough brown fruitage of the golden-rennet's next neighbour the russeting; and at that smallest urchin of all, seated apart in infantine state on the turfy bank, with that toothsome piece of deformity a crumpling in each hand, now biting from one sweet, hard, juicy morsel, and now from another. Is not that a pretty

* "Deedly." I am not quite sure the word is good English; but it is genuine Hampshire, and is used by the most correct of female writers, Miss Austen. It means (and it is no small merit that it has no exact synonym) anything done with a profound and plodding attention, an action which engrosses all the powers of mind and body. (Note in Macmillan's 1902 edition.)

English picture? And then, farther up the orchard, that bold, hardy lad, the eldest born, who has scaled (Heaven knows how) the tall, straight upper branch of that great pear-tree, and is sitting there as securely and as fearlessly, in as much real safety and apparent danger, as a sailor on the top-mast. Now he shakes the tree with a mighty swing that brings down a pelting shower of stony bergamots, which the father gathers rapidly up, whilst the mother can hardly assist for her motherly fear—a fear which only spurs the spirited boy to bolder venture. Is not that a pretty picture? And they are such a handsome family, too, the Brookers. I do not know that there is any gipsy blood, but there is the true gipsy complexion, richly brown, with cheeks and lips so red, black hair curling close to their heads in short crisp rings, white shining teeth—and such eyes! That sort of beauty entirely eclipses your mere roses and lilies. Even Lizzy, the prettiest of fair children, would look poor and watery by the side of Willy Brooker, the sober little personage who is picking up the apples with his small chubby hands, and filling the basket so orderly, next to his father the most useful man in the field. “Willy!” He hears without seeing; for we are quite hidden by the high bank, and a spreading hawthorn-bush that overtops it, though between the lower branches and the grass we have found a convenient peep-hole. “Willy!” The voice sounds to him like some fairy dream, and the black eyes are raised from the ground with sudden wonder, the long silky eyelashes thrown back till they rest on the delicate brow, and a deeper blush is burning on those dark cheeks, and a smile is dimpling about those scarlet lips. But the voice is silent now, and the little quiet boy, after a moment’s pause, is gone coolly to work again. He is indeed a most lovely child. I think some day or other he must marry Lizzy; I shall propose the match to their respective mammas. At present the parties are rather too young for a wedding—the intended bridegroom being, as I should judge, six, or thereabout, and the fair bride barely five—but at least

we might have a betrothment after the royal fashion : there could be no harm in that.

Lady Ritchie, in her delightful preface to the 1902 edition of "Our Village," writes as follows : " 'Are your characters and descriptions true?' somebody once asked our authoress. 'Yes, yes, yes ; as true, as true as is well possible,' she answers. 'You, as a great landscape-painter, know that in painting a favourite scene you do a little embellish, and can't help it ; you avail yourself of happy accidents of atmosphere. If anything be ugly you strike it out, or if anything be wanting you put it in. But still the picture is a likeness.' "

Just read those words of Miss Mitford's again and aloud. Let them sink in. Then read this other remark of hers : "I never could understand what people could find to like in my letters, unless it be that they have a *root* to them." Lady Ritchie adds : "The root of her own kind heart."

NARRATIVE EXERCISES.

II.

Before reading more extracts written by people out of their personal experience, write a composition about one of the following subjects. Remember that what you say must come out of your own experience, that you must feel it to be plain and honest truth, that it must have a *root* to it :

1. A scouting adventure.
2. A hay-making.
3. A rat-catching with terriers.
4. A boat-race [not necessarily the Oxford and Cambridge].
5. Learning to punt.
6. An election incident.
7. Winning a scholarship.
8. A fire : how it began, continued, and ended.
9. Visiting a lighthouse.
10. A theft or a burglary.

11. A day's visit to friends in the country or in the town. 12. A fight. 13. A pleasant surprise. 14. A picnic. 15. Any interesting incident connected with animals, insects, fish, or birds.

A. Make a list on paper of all and any ideas that occur to you with regard to the subject you have chosen. B. Cross out any points that have little or no relation to the main interest of what you are writing about. C. Arrange your ideas in sensible order. D. Write your description. E. Is it *alive*? is it interesting? is it plain and honest truth? has it a *root* in you? Do not be afraid to give yourself away. People will respect you all the more for writing plainly and very sincerely. If the subject interests you, with careful handling and sincere writing it will interest others. An engineer, a motorist, an architect, a schoolmaster, a scientist, will interest his audience very much in a highly technical description if he is enthusiastic about it, and uses plain, clear, "full-of-blood" language. Great politicians have often held—or shall I say gripped?—audiences that were really hostile to their opinions because their speeches came from their very hearts. They had a *root* in themselves.

MAKE ONE INCIDENT IN YOUR DESCRIPTION STAND OUT MORE THAN THE OTHERS. MAKE ALL THE OTHER PARTS OF THE WRITING LEAD UP TO OR AWAY FROM THIS MOST IMPORTANT INCIDENT. LET YOUR NARRATIVE HAVE A BEGINNING (SHORT), A MIDDLE, AND AN END.

We will go into these points of the chief dramatic incident and the form later on. For the moment, make your narrative *live*.

Write *two* or *three* different short accounts of the subject chosen. Show up the one which has most life in it.

MORE EXTRACTS FOR STUDY.

As another example of very simple and interesting treatment of a simple subject—a personal experience—read this account of birds in difficulties. It is by Russell Lowell, the American poet and critic, who was once the United States Ambassador at the Court of St. James. The quotation is from a book called “My Study Windows”:

The robins, by constant attacks and annoyances, have succeeded in driving off the blue jays who used to build in our pines, their gay colours and quaint, noisy ways making them welcome and amusing neighbours. I once had the chance of doing a kindness to a household of them, which they received with very friendly condescension. I had had my eye for some time upon a nest, and was puzzled by a constant fluttering of what seemed full-grown wings in it whenever I drew nigh. At last I climbed the tree, in spite of angry protests from the old birds against my intrusion. The mystery had a very simple solution. In building the nest, a long piece of packthread had been somewhat loosely woven in. Three of the young had contrived to entangle themselves in it, and had become full-grown without being able to launch themselves upon the air. One was unharmed; another had so tightly twisted the cord about its shank that one foot was curled up and seemed paralyzed; the third, in its struggles to escape, had sawn through the flesh of the thigh, and so much harmed itself that I thought it humane to put an end to its misery. When I took out my knife to cut their hempen bonds, the heads of the family seemed to divine my friendly intent. Suddenly ceasing their cries and threats, they perched quietly within reach of my hand, and watched me in my work of manumission. This, owing to the fluttering terror of the prisoners, was an affair of some delicacy; but

ere long I was rewarded by seeing one of them fly away to a neighbouring tree, while the cripple, making a parachute of his wings, came lightly to the ground, and hopped off as well as he could with one leg, obsequiously waited on by his elders. A week later I had the satisfaction of meeting him in the pine-walk, in good spirits, and already so far recovered as to be able to balance himself with the lame foot. I have no doubt that in his old age he accounted for his lameness by some handsome story of a wound received at the famous Battle of the Pines, when our tribe, overcome by numbers, was driven from its ancient camping-ground.

The merit of this story lies in its truth and in its simplicity. The only piece of ornamentation in it is the comment at the end, but this, again, is true to Lowell's experience. It is a little gentle chaffing of the type of man who works up a commonplace event into a dramatic feature in which he figured prominently. If you have read in French or in an English translation the adventure with a *blind* and *tame* lion in "Tartarin de Tarascon," you will know what I mean.

Here is yet another instance of a simple description. I have taken it from one of Charles Dickens's letters. He describes some conjuring tricks he had witnessed at Boulogne. Speaking of the conjurer, he says :

You are to observe that he was *with the company*, not in the least removed from them ; and that we occupied the front row. He brought in some writing paper with him when he entered, and a black-lead pencil ; and he wrote some words on half-sheets of paper. One of these half-sheets he folded into two, and gave to Catherine to hold. Madame, he says aloud, will you think of any class of objects ? I have done so.—Of what class, Madame ? Animals.—Will you think of a particular animal, Madame ? I have done so.—Of what animal ? The Lion.—Will you

think of another class of objects, Madame? I have done so.—Of what class? Flowers.—The particular flower? The Rose.—Will you open the paper you hold in your hand? She opened it, and there was neatly and plainly written in pencil: *The Lion. The Rose.* Nothing whatever had led up to these words, and they were the most distant conceivable from Catherine's thoughts when she entered the room. He had several common school slates about a foot square. He took one of these to a field officer from the camp, décoré and what not, who sat about six from us, with a grave saturnine friend next him. My General, says he, will you write a name on this slate, after your friend has done so? Don't show it to me. The friend wrote a name, and the General wrote a name. The conjurer took the slate rapidly from the officer, threw it violently down on the ground with its written side to the floor, and asked the officer to put his foot upon it and keep it there: which he did. The conjurer considered for about a minute, looking devilish hard at the General.—My General, says he, your friend wrote Dagobert upon the slate under your foot. The friend admits it.—And you, my General, wrote Nicholas. General admits it, and everybody laughs and applauds.—My General, will you excuse me if I change that name into a name expressive of the power of a great nation, which, in happy alliance with the gallantry and spirit of France, will shake that name to its centre? Certainly I will excuse it.—My General, take up the slate and read. General reads: DAGOBERT, VICTORIA. The first in his friend's writing; the second in a new hand. I never saw anything in the least like this; or at all approaching to the absolute certainty, the familiarity, quickness, absence of all machinery, and actual face-to-face, hand-to-hand fairness between the conjurer and the audience, with which it was done. I have not the slightest idea of the secret.

I have not been able to get the beginning of the letter. No doubt there is a BRIEF introduction to the

conjuring. Do you not feel how interested Dickens was in the performance, how it amazed him? And yet how simply he has written, giving *almost* a shorthand writer's account of it. Almost, but not quite, for he has left out some details, to him unnecessary, and he has added the description of his feelings: "I never saw anything in the least like this. . . ."

Do you notice how simple it all is? Compare this letter with almost any of his books, which to me are disfigured by manner and mannerisms, although we must remember that Dickens used those mannerisms as a deliberate means of expressing his peculiar humour.

Here is another description of a conjuring performance. It is from Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford":

At length we set off; and at the door, under the carriage-way at the "George," we met Mrs. Forrester and Miss Pole: the latter was discussing the subject of the evening with more vehemence than ever, and throwing A's and B's at our heads like hailstones. She had even copied one or two of the "receipts"—as she called them—for the different tricks, on backs of letters, ready to explain and to detect Signor Brunoni's arts.

We went into the cloak-room adjoining the Assembly Room; Miss Matty gave a sigh or two to her departed youth, and the remembrance of the last time she had been there, as she adjusted her pretty new cap before the strange, quaint old mirror in the cloak-room. The Assembly Room had been added to the inn, about a hundred years before, by the different county families, who met together there once a month during the winter to dance and play at cards. Many a county beauty had first swum through the minuet that she afterwards danced before Queen Charlotte in this very room. It was said that one of the Gunnings had graced the apartment with her beauty; it was certain that a rich and beautiful widow, Lady Williams, had here been

smitten with the noble figure of a young artist, who was staying with some family in the neighbourhood for professional purposes, and accompanied his patrons to the Cranford Assembly. And a pretty bargain poor Lady Williams had of her handsome husband, if all tales were true. Now, no beauty blushed and dimpled along the sides of the Cranford Assembly Room; no handsome artist won hearts by his bow, *chapeau bras* in hand; the old room was dingy; the salmon-coloured paint had faded into a drab; great pieces of plaster had chipped off from the white wreaths and festoons on its walls; but still a mouldy odour of aristocracy lingered about the place, and a dusty recollection of the days that were gone made Miss Matty and Mrs. Forrester bridle up as they entered, and walk mincingly up the room, as if there were a number of genteel observers, instead of two little boys with a stick of toffy between them with which to beguile the time.

We stopped short at the second front row; I could hardly understand why, until I heard Miss Pole ask a stray waiter if any of the county families were expected; and when he shook his head, and believed not, Mrs. Forrester and Miss Matty moved forwards, and our party represented a conversational square. The front row was soon augmented and enriched by Lady Glenmire and Mrs. Jamieson. We six occupied the two front rows, and our aristocratic seclusion was respected by the groups of shopkeepers who strayed in from time to time and huddled together on the back benches. At least I conjectured so, from the noise they made, and the sonorous bumps they gave in sitting down; but when, in weariness of the obstinate green curtain that would not draw up, but would stare at me with two odd eyes, seen through holes, as in the old tapestry story, I would fain have looked round at the merry chattering people behind me, Miss Pole clutched my arm, and begged me not to turn, for "it was not the thing." What "the thing" was I never could find out, but it must have been something eminently dull and tiresome. However, we all sat

eyes right, square front, gazing at the tantalizing curtain, and hardly speaking intelligibly, we were so afraid of being caught in the vulgarity of making any noise in a place of public amusement. Mrs. Jamieson was the most fortunate, for she fell asleep.

At length the eyes disappeared—the curtain quivered—one side went up before the other, which stuck fast; it was dropped again, and, with a fresh effort, and a vigorous pull from some unseen hand, it flew up, revealing to our sight a magnificent gentleman in the Turkish costume, seated before a little table, gazing at us (I should have said with the same eyes that I had last seen through the hole in the curtain) with calm and condescending dignity, "like a being of another sphere," as I heard a sentimental voice ejaculate behind me.

"That's not Signor Brunoni!" said Miss Pole decidedly; and so audibly that I am sure he heard, for he glanced down over his flowing beard at our party with an air of mute reproach. "Signor Brunoni had no beard—but perhaps he'll come soon." So she lulled herself into patience. Meanwhile Miss Matty had reconnoitred through her eyeglass, wiped it, and looked again. Then she turned round, and said to me, in a kind, mild, sorrowful tone:

"You see, my dear, turbans *are* worn."

But we had no time for more conversation. The Grand Turk, as Miss Pole chose to call him, arose and announced himself as Signor Brunoni.

"I don't believe him!" exclaimed Miss Pole, in a defiant manner. He looked at her again, with the same dignified upbraiding in his countenance. "I don't!" she repeated, more positively than ever. "Signor Brunoni had not got that muffy sort of thing about his chin, but looked like a close-shaved Christian gentleman."

Miss Pole's energetic speeches had the good effect of waking up Mrs. Jamieson, who opened her eyes wide, in sign of the deepest attention—a proceeding which silenced Miss Pole and encouraged the Grand Turk to proceed, which he did in very broken English—so

broken that there was no cohesion between the parts of his sentences; a fact which he himself perceived at last, and so left off speaking and proceeded to action.

Now we *were* astonished. How he did his tricks I could not imagine; no, not even when Miss Pole pulled out her pieces of paper and began reading aloud—or, at least, in a very audible whisper—the separate “receipts” for the most common of his tricks. If ever I saw a man frown and look enraged, I saw the Grand Turk frown at Miss Pole; but, as she said, what could be expected but unchristian looks from a Mussulman? If Miss Pole were sceptical, and more engrossed with her receipts and diagrams than with his tricks, Miss Matty and Mrs. Forrester were mystified and perplexed to the highest degree. Mrs. Jamieson kept taking her spectacles off and wiping them, as if she thought it was something defective in them which made the legerdemain; and Lady Glenmire, who had seen many curious sights in Edinburgh, was very much struck with the tricks, and would not at all agree with Miss Pole, who declared that anybody could do them with a little practice, and that she would herself undertake to do all he did, with two hours given to study the Encyclopædia, and make her third finger flexible.

At last Miss Matty and Mrs. Forrester became perfectly awestricken. They whispered together. I sat just behind them, so I could not help hearing what they were saying. Miss Matty asked Mrs. Forrester “if she thought it was quite right to have come to see such things? She could not help fearing they were lending encouragement to something that was not quite ——” A little shake of the head filled up the blank. Mrs. Forrester replied that the same thought had crossed her mind; she, too, was feeling very uncomfortable, it was so very strange. She was quite certain that it was her pocket-handkerchief which was in that loaf just now; and it had been in her own hand not five minutes before. She wondered who had furnished the bread? She was sure it could not be Dakin, because he was the churchwarden. Suddenly Miss Matty half turned towards me—

"Will you look, my dear—you are a stranger in the town, and it won't give rise to unpleasant reports—will you just look round and see if the rector is here? If he is, I think we may conclude that this wonderful man is sanctioned by the Church, and that will be a great relief to my mind."

I looked, and I saw the tall, thin, dry, dusty rector, sitting surrounded by National School boys, guarded by troops of his own sex from any approach of the many Cranford spinsters. His kind face was all agape with broad smiles, and the boys around him were in chinks* of laughing. I told Miss Matty that the Church was smiling approval, which set her mind at ease.

I have never named Mr. Hayter, the rector, because I, as a well-to-do and happy young woman, never came in contact with him. He was an old bachelor, but as afraid of matrimonial reports getting abroad about him as any girl of eighteen; and he would rush into a shop, or dive down an entry, sooner than encounter any of the Cranford ladies in the street; and as for the Preference parties, I did not wonder at his not accepting invitations to them. To tell the truth, I always suspected Miss Pole of having given very vigorous chase to Mr. Hayter when he first came to Cranford; and not the less because now she appeared to share so vividly in his dread lest her name should ever be coupled with his. He found all his interests among the poor and helpless; he had treated the National School boys this very night to the performance; and virtue was for once its own reward, for they guarded him right and left, and clung round him as if he had been the queen-bee and they the swarm. He felt so safe in their environment that he could even afford to give our party a bow as we filed out. Miss Pole ignored his presence, and pretended to be absorbed in convincing us that we had been cheated, and had not seen Signor Brunoni after all.

Compare this carefully with the letter by Dickens. What was the *centre of interest* to Dickens? What is

* Chinks = fits.

it that most interests the speaker in the "Cranford" story? Of the two, which brings out the actual conjuring best? Which gives most atmosphere, most local colour to the tale? Which of the two do you prefer, and why do you prefer it?

Supposing that my intention, when I made the "Cranford" extract, was to present a description of a conjuring performance, do you think I have put in more at the beginning than was necessary? If so, where would you have begun, and why? Consider the end in the same way. Have I in the extract gone farther than was necessary?

Supposing, again, that you were using the same words as Mrs. Gaskell, but wished to lay stress on the conjuring—how much would you eliminate? Point out which phrases or sentences would disappear, and where you would begin and end.

Write out the extract rearranged in this manner.

COMPOSITION SUBJECTS.

Write an account of any good conjuring tricks you have seen. Have you ever been present at a performance by Lafayette or Maskelyne and Devant? or

Give an account of any good "turn" you have seen at a variety theatre in the way of performing animals or acrobats; or

Describe a gymkhana at which any clever work was done; or

Describe any trick-flying you have seen; or

Write an account of some trick-swimming which interested you.

Again and again I have laid stress on the fact that we are concerned at present only with *matter*, and only with the narrative of things seen. With *form* we shall deal later on. But we cannot altogether ignore the three points which follow:

1. *Form.*—(a) Have a short beginning, to stage your characters. (b) Lead up to a principal event. (c) Conclude so that your story really *is* ended, and do not leave your reader in the middle of your story.

2. *Selection.*—Select. Add and cut out, but chiefly *cut out*.

3. *Sequence.*—Let your statements and comments follow one another in the right order.

I will add, for you to read aloud and judge, one more extract. It is from the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," by De Quincey.

What is the principal event in the extract? What is the object of the comparatively lengthy disquisition on the veiling of men's natures? Is the *sleeping* more important than the *kind act* in the writer's mind?

It was past eight o'clock when I reached the Gloucester coffee-house; and, the Bristol mail being on the point of going off, I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion of this mail soon laid me asleep. It is somewhat remarkable that the first easy or refreshing sleep which I had enjoyed for some months was on the outside of a mail-coach—a bed which, at this day, I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to convince me how easily a man, who has never been in any great distress, may pass through life without knowing, in his own person at least, anything of the possible goodness of the human heart—or, as I must add with a sigh, of its possible vileness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's *natures*, that to the ordinary observer the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded—the vast and multitudinous compass of their several harmonies reduced to the meagre outline of differences expressed in the gamut or alphabet of elementary sounds. The case was this: For the first four or

five miles from London, I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch to his side: and, indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it is, I should have fallen off from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily, as perhaps, in the same circumstances, most people would; he expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant; and, if I had parted with him at that moment, I should have thought of him (if I had considered it worth while to think of him at all) as a surly and almost brutal fellow. However, I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint; and, therefore, I apologized to him, and assured him I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the future; and, at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I was ill and in a weak state from long suffering; and that I could not afford at that time to take an inside place. This man's manner changed, upon hearing this explanation, in an instant; and when I next woke for a minute from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for in spite of my wishes and efforts I had fallen asleep again within two minutes from the time I had spoken to him), I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off; and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman, so that, at length, I almost lay in his arms; and this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol.

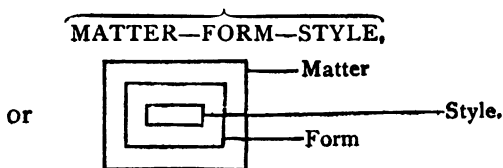
The extracts in this chapter have been given with a view to emphasizing the necessity for personal sincerity in narrative; but it will be worth your while to read through them once or twice again, preferably aloud, and to compare the flow of language, the melody of the style, the choice of words, so that you may make of one or another of these extracts a model, *not to imitate*, but to stand before you as you write.



CHAPTER II

SIMPLE EXPRESSION

IF such a thing were possible, one ought to deal with *matter, form, and style*, at one and the same time, thus :



But, in order to make real progress it is better to take these essential parts of written composition separately. We have made one great point, which is, that all good writing is based upon experience of things seen, noticed, or felt. All other composition is simply academic. In this country there has been a great deal too much of that sort of writing in and after the years of learning. The academic essay still survives in some of the more expensive periodicals. It is a relic of dead things. We live now in times of rapid growth and change; every man and woman is likely to be called upon at some period or another to express honest opinions by speech or in writing on the movements which the rise of democracy is bringing about. We are very much alive, and the sooner the academic essay is buried, the better will it be for our powers of expression.

There is, however, a great difference between having something to say and being able to say it. The power to express so as to convey exactly what one desires to convey may be called *Style*. People are in the habit of quoting with approval the statement of Buffon, the French naturalist, that "Style is the man himself." This to me means that the man who writes as he speaks, and speaks as he feels, so that his readers can recognize him by his writing, as they would by hearing his voice, has *Style*.

But it is very difficult to be natural even in one's everyday life; in writing it is more difficult. It is only by practice that most people can attain natural expression. At first they are either inarticulate, incoherent, stammering, or else they are over-elaborated and affected. Both of these are forms of shyness and self-consciousness. One is the shyness of the person who is afraid of going too far; the other, of the person who is afraid of not going far enough. The exercises which follow are designed to give you practice in expressing simple things simply.

EXPRESSION EXERCISES.

The sentiment or fact you will be asked to express will often be in rather stilted or affected language; it is for you to give the natural form or forms.

Be neither affected nor blunt. Beware of using set phrases which have been used so often that they have ceased to express anything at all. They are like portraits, which reproduce the features of the person painted, but leave out all that matters—the life, the love or the hate, the charm, the weakness or the indomitable will, the inner self—shall we call it the Soul?

As an example of trite bluntness, that might have failed of its object had I not known the man who wrote it, I give this sentence from a letter written to me :

“We shall be pleased to see you, and shall try to make you feel at home.”

To a stranger that might easily have meant that the guest was not likely to feel at home, but that the host would do his best to feign a welcome.

EXERCISE I.

Express briefly in *three* different ways—

(a) That you feel pleasure at meeting a friend to whom you are speaking. (b) Your surprise at observing the advent of a balloon. (c) Your disgust on hearing of an act of cruelty. (d) That you have spent a short time in gentle horticulture. (e) That you have taken walking exercise. (f) That you are very hungry. (g) That there were a great number of people in the theatre. (h) That you are looking for something. (i) Your fright at discovering that you were sitting on a powder-barrel. (j) That you have completed your appointed task. (k) That the barrel-organ interferes with your peace. (l) That your foot slipped, and you rolled down the hill. (m) That a blue-tit ate a piece of coco-nut. (n) That the sweet-peas are growing. (o) That you disapprove of a companion's behaviour. (p) That you admire a certain man who has saved a child's life. (q) That you are sorry the cake is finished. (r) The reason for your lateness. (s) That an aeroplane is passing. (t) That your friend's teacup is slipping overboard into the water. (u) That a coach-horn has interrupted you. (v) That the hat of the lady in front of you is an obstacle to your proper enjoyment of the play. (w) That you would prefer your eccentric aunt not to embrace you in public. (x) That, much as you admire the works of Pope, Doctor Johnson, and Gay, you would prefer your eccentric aunt to talk at least once a day about, say,

pudding. (y) Your apprehension that there may be a precipitation of the moisture in the air. (z) The pleasure you feel that a friend should be coming to stay with you.

EXERCISE II.

Alter the following sentences so as to make questions of them. Try to put the question down in *two* different ways. You are not bound by the wording, but by the *sense*.

(1) White fantail pigeons strut on the broad gravel walk at our feet. *Example*: What birds are those that strut? etc. (2) He is not good-tempered, nor could one expect him to be, under the circumstances. (3) That's a blackbird singing in the elm-tree. (4) For some reason you went away before I had finished. (5) It is absurd to suppose you could tame those chaffinches in a day. (6) It is surprising that you can believe it of him. (7) Sammy and Barbara, the bears at the Zoo, have added a good deal to their accomplishments. (8) He might be given a chance of catching his meal for himself. (9) You have done something extraordinary with the ink. (10) It is to be hoped that your jokes are usually better than that. (11) It is the street noises which prevent us from doing our work. (12) There is no reason why we should expect such a man to answer our question. (13) Nobody here can tell me what is to be done next. (14) The motor-car missed the tramcar by an inch. (15) All public-school boys write English well without being taught. (16) One begins to wonder whether our summers are always to be wet. (17) I should not like to predict the result of the match. (18) The old house has been replaced by a queer edifice of brick and stone.

EXERCISE III.

Convert the following questions into statements of fact. You are not bound by the *wording* of the question; the *sense* is the important point. Give *two* renderings. Do not give answers to the questions.

(a) How on earth do you suppose we are all going to get into that car? *Example*: No power on earth will get us all into that car. (b) Did the keeper think he had caught us trespassing? (c) Have you ever had to complain of the police? (d) Is it credible that he meant to come back? (e) Can anyone tell me why that flag is flying? (f) On what grounds did they make that accusation? (g) Is it too much to ask you to do this for me? (h) Could you not have tried to complete your share of the work? (i) Won't it be splendid if this weather holds for a few days more?

EXERCISE IV.

Describe briefly, so that anybody to whom you show the description will recognize at once without the name of the thing being given—(1) The kind of ink-pot you use in the lecture-room. (2) One of your playing-fields. (3) A motor-bus. (4) The local church or chapel. (5) The prevailing fashion in women's or men's clothes. (6) Yourself. (7) A cricket-bat or a tennis-racquet. (8) An aeroplane. (9) A barrel-organ. (10) A teapot. (11) A goalkeeper. (12) A baby (very young). (13) A nursemaid. (14) A sailor. (15) A fine day (the words *fine* and *day* must not appear). (16) The guard of a train which is about to start.

You are asked for a description, with the environment if necessary. A definition is not wanted. You will best do it by some imaginary scene. Thus: "It is made of lead, battered, cut, and bent, and fits into a hole in the desk in front of me—a hole that time and penknives have made too big," etc. Attributes of the thing or person may be given.

EXERCISE V.

Rearrange or rewrite the following sentences, so as to bring out the force of the italicized word or words.

Do not underline. It is quite possible to give emphasis, stress, force, to a word or a phrase, either by altering its position (except where such an alteration would upset the accepted rules as to the order of words)

or by expressing the meaning differently. Merely altering one word will not do. (1) Please do not come *to-morrow*. (2) *Please* do not come to-morrow. (3) I *hoped* I should have seen him. (4) *It would never do* for us to be seen in such a place. (5) *Think how frightened* he was when a snake came out of the hole! (6) As she saw the Zulu's face at the window, *she called for help*. (7) *I am sorry* you have done this. (8) It is *wrong* to expect a child of that age to work. (9) The poor fellow had been shut up in that cell alone for three months; *he had been dull*. (10) As the constable rushed up the half-wrecked staircase through roaring flames, *he felt hot*. (11) Binns hesitated for a moment, gazed at the water fifty feet below, then jumped. But he turned slightly as he fell, and *the shock of the water, as he struck it, hurt him*. (12) *I am surprised* that Mr. Pilcocks likes the play. (13) *Her hat made a sensation*.

EXERCISE VI.

Read through the following extracts carefully. They are taken from various authors and places. Some have been chosen because they seemed good, some because they seemed not so good, or even actually bad. Treat each letter as a separate exercise. When you have read through the extracts given under each letter, state in writing which you put first (like best), which second, and so on. Then give your reasons for your preference or dislike.

A.—Scenery.

(i.) All around him lay the brown stretches of sand and the blue-green clumps of furze of the common; on each side of the wide and well-made road the tall banks were laden with a tangled luxuriance of brushwood and bramble and wildflowers; down in the hollow beneath us there were red-tiled farm-buildings half hid in a green maze of elms and poplars; then the scattered and irregular fields and meadows, scored with hedges and dotted with houses, led up to a series of heights that were wooded with every variety of forest

tree; while over all these undulations there lay that faint presence of mist which only served to soften the glow of the afternoon sunshine, and to show us the strong colours of the picture through a veil of tender, ethereal grey.

W. B.

(ii.) There are minute white flowers on the top of the wall, out of reach, and lichen grows against it, dried by the sun till it looks ready to crumble. By the gateway grows a thick bunch of meadow geranium, soon to flower; over the gate is the dusty highway road, quiet but dusty, dotted with the innumerable footmarks of a flock of sheep that has passed. The sound of their bleating still comes back, and the bees driven up by their feet have hardly had time to settle again on the white clover beginning to flower on the short roadside sward. All the hawthorn-leaves and briar and bramble, the honeysuckle too, is gritty with the dust that has been scattered upon it.

R. J.

(iii.) For a space they scanned the great expanse below them with eager eyes. It spread remoter and remoter, with only a few clusters of sere thorn-bushes here and there, and the dim suggestions of some now waterless ravine to break its desolation of yellow grass. Its purple distances melted at last into the bluish slopes of the further hills—hills it might be of a greener kind—and above them, invisibly supported, and seeming indeed to hang in the blue, were the snow-clad summits of mountains—that grew larger and bolder to the north-westward as the sides of the valley drew together. And westward the valley opened until a distant darkness under the sky told where the forests began.

H. G. W.

(iv.) The night wind had lulled itself into a brief quiet, and the full moon poured its white light, with the brilliance of noontide, over the vast undulating plain, and upon the silvery pools of water intersecting here and there the wide sandy bed of the river. It glinted on the shining leaves of the feathery mimosa,

turning its yellow blossoms into buds of gold. The drooping willows bent gracefully, seeking the pools below the sand, and sharply-defined black shadows were cast by the stunted trees over the vivid light in which they were bathed. F. B.

B.—*Description of Individuals.*

(a) It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of expression, an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison, lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than weblike softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. E. A. P.

(b) The figure which came slowly towards them was that of a very old man, yet one older, by many years, than his looks. For he was still straight, save for a slight stoop in the neck; but this, by the backward poise of the head thus made necessary to enable his brown eyes to meet all things, after their habit, squarely, if softly, gave him an air of alertness. He was dressed in an ordinary black *soutane*, but wore a fine white embroidered muslin skull-cap, such as natives wear, instead of a black one. His grey hair showed, still luxuriant, beneath it; and the wide sash of faded lilac silk, with tasselled ends, which was tied in a bow about his waist, set off his still slim and still graceful figure. F. A. S.

(c) Miss Nunn entered. Younger only by a year or two than Virginia, she was yet far from presenting any sorrowful image of a person on the way to old-maidenhood. She had a clear though pale skin, a vigorous frame, a brisk movement—all the signs of fairly good

health. Whether or not she could have been called a comely woman might have furnished matter for male discussion; the prevailing voice of her own sex would have denied her charm of feature. At first view the countenance seemed masculine, its expression somewhat aggressive—eyes shrewdly observant and lips consciously impregnable. But the connoisseur delayed his verdict. It was a face that invited, that compelled study. Self-confidence, intellectual keenness, a bright humour, frank courage, were traits legible enough. She wore a black serge gown, with white collar and cuffs; her thick hair rippled low upon each side of her forehead, and behind was gathered into two loose vertical coils; in shadow the hue seemed black, but when illumined it was seen to be the darkest, warmest brown. G. G.

(d) He was obviously an ecclesiastic of high rank; his dress was that of a Cistercian monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rules of that order admitted. His mantle and hood were of the best Flanders cloth, and fell in ample, and not ungraceful, folds around a handsome, though somewhat corpulent person. His countenance bore as little the marks of self-denial as his habit indicated contempt of worldly splendour. His features might have been called good, had there not lurked under the pent-house of his eye that sly epicurean twinkle which indicates the cautious voluptuary. In other respects his profession and situation had taught him a ready command over his countenance, which he could contract at pleasure into solemnity, although its natural expression was that of good-humoured self-indulgence. W. S.

C.—*Moments of Danger.*

(1) Visiting his station with one of the Godeffroys, he found his Chinamen trooping to the beach in terror. Timau had driven them out, seized their effects, and was in war-attire with his young men. A boat was despatched to Taahauku for reinforcements. As they awaited her return, they could see, from the deck of the schooner, Timau and his young men dancing the

war-dance on the hill-top till past twelve at night ; and so soon as the boat came (bringing three gendarmes, armed with chassepots, two white men from Taahauku station, and some native warriors), the party set out to seize the chief before he should awake. Day was not come, and it was a very bright moonlight morning, when they reached the hill-top where (in a house of palm-leaves) Timau was sleeping off his debauch. The assailants were fully exposed ; the interior of the hut quite dark ; the position far from sound. The gendarmes knelt with their pieces ready, and Captain Hart advanced alone. As he drew near the door he heard the snap of a gun cocking from within, and in sheer self-defence—there being no other escape—sprang into the house and grappled Timau. R. L. S.

(2) We took up our positions, each six feet in front of the targets ; a bullet which hit me would, but for the interruption, have struck on, or directly above or below, the outermost target on the right-hand side.

Vohrenlorf and Varvilliers stood on either side of the room ; the latter was to give the signal. Indeed, Vohrenlorf could not have been trusted with such a duty.

“I shall say, ‘Fire! one—two—three!’” said Varvilliers. “You will both fire before the last word is ended. Are you ready?”

We signified our assent. Wetter was pale, but apparently quite collected. I was very much alive to every impression. For example, I noticed a man’s tread outside and the tune that he was whistling. I lifted my pistol and took aim. At that moment I meant to kill Wetter if I could, and I thought that I could. It did not even occur to me that I was in any serious danger myself.

“Are you ready? Now,” said Varvilliers in smooth, distinct tones. A. H.

(3) “Princess,” I said, “these men propose to do me an infinite honour . . . and to kill me while my heart yet beats with the pride of it. . . .”

The Commandant leaned forth and blew his whistle. The bird’s song ceased, and was followed by the tramp

of men. My brain worked so clearly I could almost count their footsteps. I saw them across the Commandant's shoulder, as they filed past the corner of the window and, having formed into platoon, grounded arms, the butts of their muskets thudding softly on the turf—a score of men in blue and white uniforms, spick and span in the clear morning light.

I counted them, and drew a long breath.

A. T. Q. C.

Good description (all good writing) depends upon vivid seeing and hearing. We must see and hear vividly, like a fine, clear-cut photograph in colours, or an expensive gramophone record, all that we wish to describe. We must have these vivid images in our own minds. Every part of them must stand out clearly, every part that we think essential or important. After this vivid observing and recording we must try to make our reader see and hear vividly all that we are describing. We must not be satisfied with the first form of words in which we express our picture. We must try several forms of words. We must select that which seems to us to conjure up best the memory we have. Later, it will be seen that such practice in describing concrete scenes or events will help us to set out clearly our ideas, the opinions we have in our minds, so that we can be quite sure of making others understand the point of view we take up. For the time we will continue to work on concrete examples.

EXERCISE VII.

Describe in about 100 words, in such a way as to arrest the reader's attention, and to give him a clear, coloured, vivid image of what you are describing—

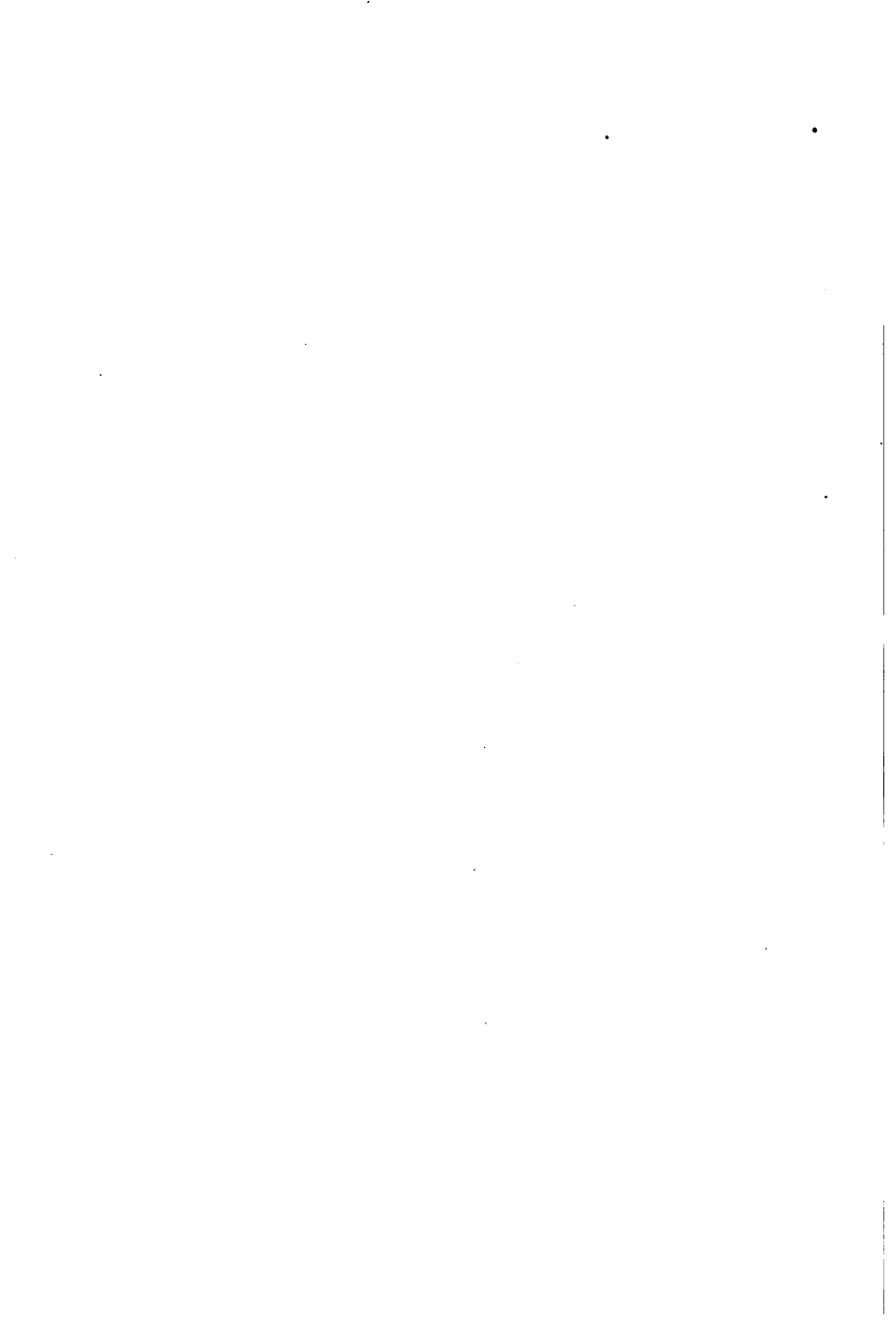
(1) Any country scene you know well. (2) A street in a London slum or an ugly quarter. (3) The inside of a

- cottage. (4) A winter's day. (5) A summer evening. (6) Two men fighting. (7) A football-player kicking a goal, or scoring a try, or a player winning game and set; or a hockey-player saving a goal. [50 to 100 words.] (8) A monkey stealing a cake from another monkey. (9) Waking from a nightmare in the dark.

EXERCISE VIII.

Give a vivid description, with a good, dramatic beginning and conclusion, that really *is* an end, of any dream or nightmare you have had.





CHAPTER III

FORM

A. LOGICAL SEQUENCE.

TO M. T. H. S.

HAVE you ever seen a Japanese print? A fish leaping at a fly, a blackbird sitting on a branch covered with cherry-blossoms, a stork standing in the water—these are some of the astonishingly simple subjects Japanese artists take for their pictures. Now consider, apart from the delicate colouring, the truth of the painting, and often the gentle humorousness, why the print pleases so many people. Imagine that *any single part* of the picture had been placed in a different position. Would the effect have been so pleasing? I am certain that it would not. The places of the various components of the picture, in relation to one another, are inevitable. That is why Japanese art is so acceptable. There is a kind of “just-so-ness” about it. Alter the position of any single part, and you destroy the balance.

The same is true of writing. This balance and shape is one of the essentials of *form*. I shall take the point later on. But there is another point: each portion of a composition, whether in writing, or sculpture, or painting, must lead one *logically* to the part next to it. There must be no sudden jumps. A jump means divided interest, and divided interest means to the sensitive man annoyance—to people in general it means *loss of interest*.

And the one thing a writer, or a painter, or a sculptor must do is to gain and preserve the interest of the public.

I have seen pictures with such jumps in them. They are bad pictures. One consisted of a beautiful meadow and a beautiful hedge. But to me the meadow had nothing to do with the hedge, and my eye actually jumped from one picture to the other, for the man had painted two pictures. He was a painter, not an artist. Whistler or Nicholson, or Corot or Daubigny, or Harpignies or Matthew Maris, would have painted the hedge so as to make the meadow indispensable, and the meadow would have led the eye to the hedge. One would have said, not "This is a beautiful meadow and a beautiful hedge," but "This is a beautiful picture."

Yet each of those painters I mention would have painted the picture differently. Given any three or seven or twenty or any particular number of objects in a picture, you can arrange them in a thousand different ways, yet the logical connection of them must be preserved.

Now, in writing one is more restricted. If you are describing an event which consists of a series of incidents, it becomes far more difficult to shift about these incidents. "One thing leads to another," but it is obvious that the connection must be A—B—C—D—E, etc. In the story of the conjuring trick you could not begin with the trick and end with the description of coming into the room. Remember I have not said there was *only one* order, but that to a great extent the number of possible orders is restricted. The medium of the narrative alters circumstances. For instance, in a play one must show the sequence of events which lead to a murder. In a novel one *might* begin with the murder scene, then in Chapter II. one might describe the previous life of the enemies, showing why the regret-

table incident had occurred. But if the murder was the dramatic climax of the story, your novel would be a failure from the moment you had begun by telling your readers all that they wanted to know. You would have started with the shudder at 6 p.m., and ended with a snore at 10 o'clock; whereas you wanted to keep them awake first, and then make them afraid to put the candle out.

In writing, one statement must, to the reader, appear the inevitable outcome of the statement just before it.

The exercises which follow are designed to make you arrange your thoughts logically.

SEQUENCE EXERCISES.

I.

The statements below are given in *no particular order*. Arrange them in writing so that they appear to follow one another naturally.

SET A.

THE BALLOON HOAX.

(Introductory paragraph only.)

1. The only alteration in the MS. received has been made for the purpose of throwing the hurried account of our agent, Mr. Forsyth, into a connected and intelligible form. 2. The particulars furnished below may be relied on as authentic and accurate in every respect, as, with a slight exception, they are copied *verbatim* from the joint diaries of Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, to whose politeness our agent is indebted for much verbal information respecting the balloon itself, its construction, and other matters of interest. 3. The great problem is at length solved! 4. *The Atlantic has been actually crossed in a balloon!* 5. The air, as well as the earth and the ocean, has been

subdued by science, and will become a common and convenient highway for mankind. 6. And this, too, without difficulty—without any great apparent danger—with thorough control of the machine—and in the inconceivably brief period of seventy-five hours from shore to shore. 7. By the energy of an agent at Charlestown, S.C., we are enabled to be the first to furnish the public with a detailed account of this most extraordinary voyage, which was performed between Saturday, the 6th instant, at 11 a.m., and 2 p.m. on Tuesday, the 9th instant.

[There is one piece of essential information missing in the above. What is it?] EDGAR ALLAN POE.

SET B.

THE DÉSOBLIGEANT.*

1. Now, there being no travelling through France and Italy without a chaise, and Nature generally prompting us to the thing we are fittest for, I walked out into the coach-yard to buy or hire something of that kind to my purpose. 2. When a man is discontented with himself, it has one advantage, however, that it puts him into an excellent frame of mind for making a bargain. 3. So I instantly got into it, and finding it in tolerable harmony with my feelings, I ordered the waiter to call Monsieur Dessein, the master of the hotel. 4. An old *désobligeant*, in the farthest corner of the Court, took my fancy at first sight. 5. But Monsieur Dessein, being gone to vespers, and not caring to face the Franciscan, whom I saw on the opposite side of the court in conference with a lady just arrived at the inn, I drew the taffeta curtain betwixt us, and, being determined to write my journey, I took out my pen and ink, and wrote the preface to it—the *désobligeant*.

SET C.

1. Deceased was a "translator" of boots. 2. Mary Collins, a miserable-looking woman, said that she lived

* A chaise so called in France, from its holding but one person.

with the deceased and his son in a room at 2, Cobb's Court, Christ Church. 3. Deceased and his son used to work night and day to try and get a little bread and tea, and pay for the room (2s. a week), so as to keep the home together. 4. An inquiry was held on Friday by Mr. Richards, Deputy-coroner, at the White Horse Tavern, Christ Church, Spitalfields, respecting the death of Michael Collins, aged fifty-eight years. 5. Witness went out and bought old boots; deceased and his son made them into good ones, and then witness sold them for what she could get at the shops.

JOHN RUSKIN.

SET D.

1. He wanted to wear it everywhere, and show it to all sorts of people. 2. It was green and gold, and woven so that I cannot describe how delicate and fine it was, and there was a tie of orange fluffiness that tied-up under his chin. 3. There was once a little man whose mother made him a beautiful suit of clothes. 4. And the buttons in their newness shone like stars. 5. He thought over all the places he had ever visited, and all the scenes he had ever heard described, and tried to imagine what the feel of it would be if he were to go now to those scenes and places wearing his shining suit, and he wanted to go out forthwith into the long grass and the hot sunshine of the meadow wearing it. 6. He was proud and pleased by his suit beyond measure, and stood before the long looking-glass when first he put it on, so astonished and delighted with it that he could hardly turn himself away. 7. Just to wear it! 8. It was his wedding-suit, she said. 9. She told him he must take great care of his suit, for never would he have another nearly so fine; he must save it and save it, and only wear it on rare and great occasions. 10. But his mother told him, "No."

H. G. WELLS.

SET E.

[These first lines are given to guide you. "*The hive-bees are the most impatient of insects; they cannot bear to entangle their wings beating against grasses or boughs.*"]

1. His broad back with tawny bar buoyantly glides over the golden buttercups. 2. No one cares for the humble-bee. 3. If entangled, the humble-bee climbs up a sorrel-stem and takes wing, without any sign of annoyance. 4. He hums to himself as he goes, so happy is he. 5. It is the patient humble-bee that goes down into the forest of the mowing-grass. 6. He knows no skep, no cunning work in glass receives his labour, no artificial saccharine aids him when the beams of the sun are cold, there is no step to his house that he may alight in comfort; the way is not made clear for him that he may start straight for the flowers, nor are any sown for him. 7. The butcher-bird, with a beak like a crooked iron nail, drives him to the ground, and leaves him pierced with a thorn; but no hail of shot revenges his tortures. 8. He has no shelter if the storm descends suddenly; he has no dome of twisted straw well thatched and tiled to retreat to. 2. The grass stiffens at nightfall (in autumn), and he must creep where he may, if possibly he may escape the frost.

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

SET F.

1. In these luxurious days we should not unnecessarily condemn a pastime that tends to these results. 2. No man can succeed in either who gives himself up to dissipation and self-indulgence. 3. and is equally well calculated to develop some of the most useful qualities of the mind and body. 4. Boxing as at present conducted in scores of places of public resort every week is no more brutal than fencing. 5. — courage, decision, rapidity of movement, quickness of hand and eye, and sound physical condition. 6. His body must be a well-trained, effective instrument, that can be relied upon to answer the call of the will.—*Standard*.

SET G.

1. A smaller eel, about six inches long, also had emerged, and was following. 2. Suddenly the little boy, who had lingered behind, cried out: "Look at the water-snake climbing up the rock!" 3. A few weeks

ago I was strolling with my little son up a mountain brook. 4. Sure enough, the eel was out of the water, perhaps a foot, and clinging upwards to the opposite face of the chasm in the cool shade of an overhanging bush. 5. I noticed a small eel about nine inches long swimming near the surface and at the far side of a deep pool, the head of which was a narrow chasm, perhaps a yard wide, with precipitous walls a few feet high of slimy rock, into which the water fell over a ledge, making a little cascade. 6. We tried to catch them, but they slipped back into the water, the slimy rock affording us no foothold. 7. It was one of those broiling days about three o'clock in the afternoon.—
From the correspondence columns of the "Daily Mail."

SET H.

1. At that moment the criticism which resulted from Taine's theories tried to effect a *rapprochement* of the artistic and scientific domains in criticism and in the psychologic novel. 2. The movement is a direct offshoot of the first Impressionism, originated by a group of young painters who admired it and thought of pushing further still its chromatic principles. 3. Chevreul had continued on this path by establishing his beautiful theories on the analysis of the solar spectrum. 4. The beginnings of the movement designated under the name of "Neo-Impressionism" can be traced back to about 1880. 5. The flourishing of Impressionism coincided, as a matter of fact, with certain scientific labours concerning optics. 6. M. Charles Henry, an original and remarkable spirit, occupied himself in turn with these delicate problems by applying them directly to æsthetics, which Helmholtz and Chevreul had not thought of doing. 7. The painters, too, gave way to this longing for precision which seems to have been the great preoccupation of intellects from 1880 to 1889. 8. M. Charles Henry had the idea of creating relations between this branch of science and the laws of painting. 9. Helmholtz had just published his works on the perception of colours and sounds by means of waves.

10. As a friend of several young painters, he had a real influence over them, showing them that the new vision due to the instinct of Monet and of Manet might perhaps be scientifically verified, and might establish fixed principles in a sphere where hitherto the laws of colouring had been the effects of individual conception.—CAMILLE MAUCLAIR, *translated by P. G. KONODY.*

SET I.

[A speech delivered at Port Vendres after the great French naval review of September, 1911.]

1. France claims all our devotion, and is more than ever worthy of it. [§]* 2. He knows that French genius was never more inventive nor French labour more fruitful. [§] 3. The French naval review of September 4 has shown the country that it has in its hands in the Fleet, as in the Army, a solid, trained, and self-reliant force. 4. Sometimes the smoke thrown off from the fire of our passions may veil her brilliance from our eyes, but the cool observer will not be misled. [§] 5. It is the feast of patriotism you have come here to celebrate; it is also the feast of the union of France. 6. Then, altogether and with one accord, let us drink to France, and long life to her. 7. He knows that the most astonishing discoveries of recent years have for the most part belonged to France. 8. And he tells himself that to-morrow everything may be awaited from France well understood, and France well led. 9. One only sees the tricolour that proudly flutters in the breeze, one only hears the voice of France that wills all quarrels shall cease at the moment when others would rend her. 10. Under the flag dissensions, differences, and rivalry have vanished. 11. He sees that for one airman who falls to earth ten others instantly dart forward; that for a submarine lost there is rivalry among our officers and men to obtain the favour of plunging deeper—magnificent testimony of the superb fearlessness and generous qualities of our race.

M. E. DELCASSÉ.

* [§] means the beginning of a paragraph.

SET J.

TO THE KING.

1. Had such patronage been without effect, there had been reason to believe that Nature had, by some insurmountable impediment, obstructed our proficiency; but the annual improvement of the exhibitions which your Majesty has been pleased to encourage shows that only encouragement had been wanting. 2. To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality has been for some years the duty of my station in the Academy. 3. The regular progress of cultivated life is from necessities to accommodations, from accommodations to ornaments. 4. And these discourses hope for your Majesty's acceptance as well-intended endeavours to incite that emulation which your notice has kindled, and direct those studies which your bounty has rewarded. 5. By your illustrious predecessors were established marts for manufacturers and colleges for science; but for the arts of elegance, those arts by which manufactures are embellished and science is refined, to found an academy was reserved for your Majesty.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

SEQUENCE EXERCISES.

II.

In the following sets you will find brief index notes of sentences. These index notes correspond with full sentences. The whole set of notes corresponds with a complete essay, article, or story. All that you are required to do is (1) to *rearrange these notes* so that the essay, article, or story might be reconstructed from them in a general way; (2) to *indicate* by the mark [§] where the new paragraphs should begin; (3) to give your reasons in writing for the order you have chosen and for your paragraphing.

This is the most important part of the exercise. Let your explanation consist of well-reasoned, complete sentences. Be brief and logical and clear.

SET A.

[An article in the *Daily Mail* on M. Stolypin, the Russian Premier.]

1. The province (of Saratoff), then in a revolutionary condition, which tried his courage. 2. After the University he returns to his property, where he takes up agriculture and social reform among the peasants. 3. In youth he was weak and delicate. An operation during University life leaves him with one hand paralyzed. 4. Described by a political enemy as "A brave man and a perfect gentleman." 5. Born in Dresden, of a distinguished family. 6. Activity and energy attract attention of the Government and of the authorities in his province. 7. Of noble presence and figure, he is still young. 8. Inherits from both parents energy and strong character. 9. Grave disorders break out among peasants of Saratoff. 10. Elected Marshal of provincial nobility and appointed by M. Plehve Governor of Saratoff. 11. Stolypin, without guard, goes among rioters, is received with threats, but calmly tells them they can kill him after they have heard what he has to say. 12. Very unlike usual St. Petersburg official, owing to his experience gained from difficult provincial appointments. 13. In conversation he shows he is no *doctrinaire*. 14. His high voice comes as a surprise. 15. He talks frankly and fully if his visitor is interested in Russia. 16. Height above common, broad shoulders, deep chest, make one expect a deep voice. 17. He spoke with such effect that the rioters were pacified. 18. Russia is his passion. 19. He speaks so impressively that the peculiarity of his high voice is soon forgotten. 20. A man of simple tastes, he prefers quiet home life to the publicity of his position. 21. He plays for safety, and is denounced by both extreme political parties. 22. When he came back from a tour of the Empire, undertaken to judge the effect of his law with regard to the change of land proprietorship, he showed his love for his country in his enthusiastic conversation. 23. In spite of the outrage he kept his head, remained Liberal in tendency,

but took energetic steps to repress the Terrorists. 24. In 1906 the Czar sent for him, and, in spite of his reluctance, compelled him to become Prime Minister. 25. Russian finances put on a sound footing, an understanding reached with England, great railway schemes undertaken, reconstruction of the Fleet begun, and western defences reorganized. 26. First task as Prime Minister to restore order. 27. His work in the provinces was brought to the notice of the Czar. 28. Owing to steps taken to secure Russian influence in the Western Provinces, he incurs opposition of the German element in Russia. 29. Second task to extend liberty. 30. Personal risk to which new Prime Minister is exposed is immense. 31. He wished to introduce self-government in a modified form in the Western Provinces. 32. Difficult and dangerous to reconcile these two tasks. 33. Imperial Council, as the result of intrigues, reject the law on the self-government of the Western Provinces. 34. A horrible attempt on his life results in the maiming of his daughter, the killing of thirty people, and the wounding of a great number of others. 35. Stolypin resigns. 36. Not to be drawn on his victory, and changes the conversation. 37. The Czar recalls him to power.

SET B.

AN ENGLISH FOLK-LORE STORY.

1. The magpie the cleverest builder of nests. 2. The magpie looked up and saw nobody near but the turtle-dove, so she flew into a rage and refused to tell the birds how to build nests. 3. The turtle-dove still cried, "Take two, Taffy, take two." 4. The thrush flew away when the magpie took the mud and made a cake of it. 5. The magpie took twigs and twined them round the outside. 6. Every bird took away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none waited to the end. 7. The magpie got angry and said: "One's enough, I tell you." 8. All the birds came to the magpie and asked her to teach them nest-building. 9. First she took some mud and made a round cake of

it. 10. Then she took twigs and arranged them round in the mud. 11. Then the magpie put another layer of mud over the twigs. 12. She began to show them how to do it. 13. The blackbird flew away when he saw the twigs arranged in the mud. 14. The magpie took some twigs and twined them round the outside. 15. The owl flew away when he saw another layer of mud put over the twigs. 16. The sparrow flew away when he saw the twigs twined round the outside. 17. Blackbirds make their nests with twigs twined round in the mud. 18. Sparrows make slovenly nests to this day. 19. Owls have never made better nests since. 20. The magpie took some feathers and stuff and lined the nest comfortably with it. 21. The magpie went on working till the only bird that remained was the turtle-dove, who had paid no attention at all, but kept saying, "Take two, Taffy, take two." 22. The magpie said, "One's enough." 23. The starling flew off when he saw the nest lined. 24. The turtle-dove kept saying, "Take two, Taffy, take two." 25. That is why different birds build their nests differently. 26. The magpie was just putting a twig across. 27. Starlings have comfortable nests.

SET C.

1. A few weeks later, night alarm in British camp. 2. Everybody roars with laughter. 3. A French soldier had crawled into Russian camp and cut the picket ropes of a squadron of cavalry horses. 4. When the charge of the Light Brigade took place a certain English officer was killed and his horse "Donkey" captured by the Russians. 5. "Guard, turn out!" 6. Cossack horses followed Donkey's lead. 7. Everyone prepared for attack. 8. Donkey, followed by the Russian horses, appears. 9. Donkey, as soon as he found himself free, started out for his own camp.

SEQUENCE EXERCISES.

III.

Read carefully through each of the following sets, and state which paragraph, § *A* or § *a*, ought, in your opinion, to come first. Treat each set as a separate exercise, and state in writing the reason for the order you have chosen.

SET A.

§ *A*.—One learns, for instance, with some surprise, that the very simple facts to which I have now for nearly two years been trying to draw the attention they deserve teach that—

1. War is now impossible.

2. War would ruin both the victor and the vanquished.

3. War would leave the victor worse off than the vanquished.

May I say with every possible emphasis that nothing I have ever written justifies any one of these conclusions?

§ *a*.—I have always, on the contrary, urged that—

1. War is unhappily quite possible, and, in the prevailing condition of ignorance concerning certain elementary politico-economic facts, even likely.

2. There is nothing to justify the conclusion that war would "ruin" both victor and vanquished, as from most elementary motives of self-protection each would refrain from inflicting "ruin" on the other. Indeed, I do not quite know what the "ruin" of a nation means.

3. While in the past the vanquished has often profited more by defeat than he could possibly have done by victory, this is no necessary result, and we are safest in assuming that the vanquished will suffer most.

SET B.

§ A.—I hope you will allow me in a few brief sentences to give expression to the pleasure that we all feel at the opportunity afforded us to-night to welcome to the capital of Ireland the members of the Eighty Club, who have done us the honour of paying a visit to our country. (Cheers.) We in Ireland are well aware of the character of the Eighty Club. We know its members are able and enthusiastic apostles of every progressive and democratic reform, and not least of the reform of the government of Ireland. (Cheers.) In 1886 Mr. Gladstone found amongst the members of the Eighty Club some of the ablest defenders of his great policy for the reconciliation of Ireland.

§ a.—We therefore, as Irishmen, welcome them amongst us, with all our hearts, in the name of the country. (Cheers.) They will find Ireland in many respects transformed. They will no longer find a country described as the most distressful country the world has ever seen. They will no longer find a people apathetic, despondent, almost despairing. On the contrary, they will find a country which at last has begun to prosper. (Cheers.) They will find a people alert, confident, self-reliant, and strong in their confidence in the future. (Cheers.)

SET C.

§ A.—Another artistic element in lead, of course, is the same that has given its more fictitious importance to pewter: that a certain obscuration of the glint of silver seems actually to make it more silvery. One never feels the light more than in the twilight. In

§ a.—Yet lead has really an effect on a discriminating artistic taste which is unlike that of all other metals. Lead is to all other metals much what the sea is to all the capes, crests, and definite shapes of land: it is something strong, yet soluble. Gold we think of

both these baser metals the silver is veiled: but pewter wears the light and tawdry veil of a wanton; lead the deep and real veil of a widow. The grey glimmer of lead pipes in the light is really very beautiful, though no æsthete is, as a rule, found standing and staring at it. But, then, æsthetes never do anything but what they are told. When they heard that pewter was beautiful they rushed off and bought all the pewter mugs out of the public-houses. If they had stopped and emptied the mugs instead of buying them, they might have known more than they do about the English democracy—and been much more use in the English Revolution which is coming upon us. A pious and conscientious person ought always to understand the humble utility, the quiet daily social service of anything, before he presumes artistically to admire its beauty. We should realize that cornfields are good before we see that they are golden; we should know that trees will bear fruit before we even allow them to bear flowers. On

as standing out stiffly in rays, crowns, and aureoles. Silver we think of as orbiting itself into shining plates like a mirror, or into shields like the moon. Steel we think of as pointing itself like pikes or as splitting itself up into sword-blades. But lead we think of as almost liquid. We think of it as a grey, sluggish, and even ice-bound sea, that may move slowly, or very slowly be melted—but which can be melted and can move. Steel we conceive as springing upwards in straight lines; iron as arching over in very rigid and mathematical arches. But lead is the only material we think of as flowing downwards. "Tears of steel" would be affected; and "tears of copper" would be nonsense. They would both seem to belong to that advanced school of art and letters that prides itself on extravagantly expressing nothing at all. But "tears of lead" would not be a far-fetched expression: it would express a certain heavy, humble, and descending element in the very substance itself. Some of those tears of lead—

the same simple, reverent law of service, we should never presume to like pewter unless we like beer; we should never presume to admire lead till we are ready to fire off bullets.

round and real drops—were caught by Napoleon's soldiers.

SET D.

Lord Rosebery went on to speak of the association between Dundee and St. Andrews :

§ A.—Here in this union you bring to each other what you both want. St. Andrews, as a retreat for study, with its almost matchless traditions, its ancient buildings, its history, and its renown, is a glorious centre with which a new unity like this, representing the practical and industrial spirit of one of our great communities, can best ally itself.

§ a.—I cannot imagine a union more beneficent to both parties. I do not think we shall ever see any more Universities founded on the lines of St. Andrews—a secluded place chosen for its seclusion, so that study may be pursued uninterrupted by the grosser joys and temptations of a great city. I think all Universities of the future will be situated in great industrial communities, where the want of Universities is keenly felt, and where the funds to found them are most likely to be discovered. I think, therefore, that we may regard the era of shrines of learning like St. Andrews as past. It is wise, then, when a new unity of a new kind is founded in a great centre of population, that it should try to unite itself to what

is rapidly becoming so scarce—an ancient University and its traditions.

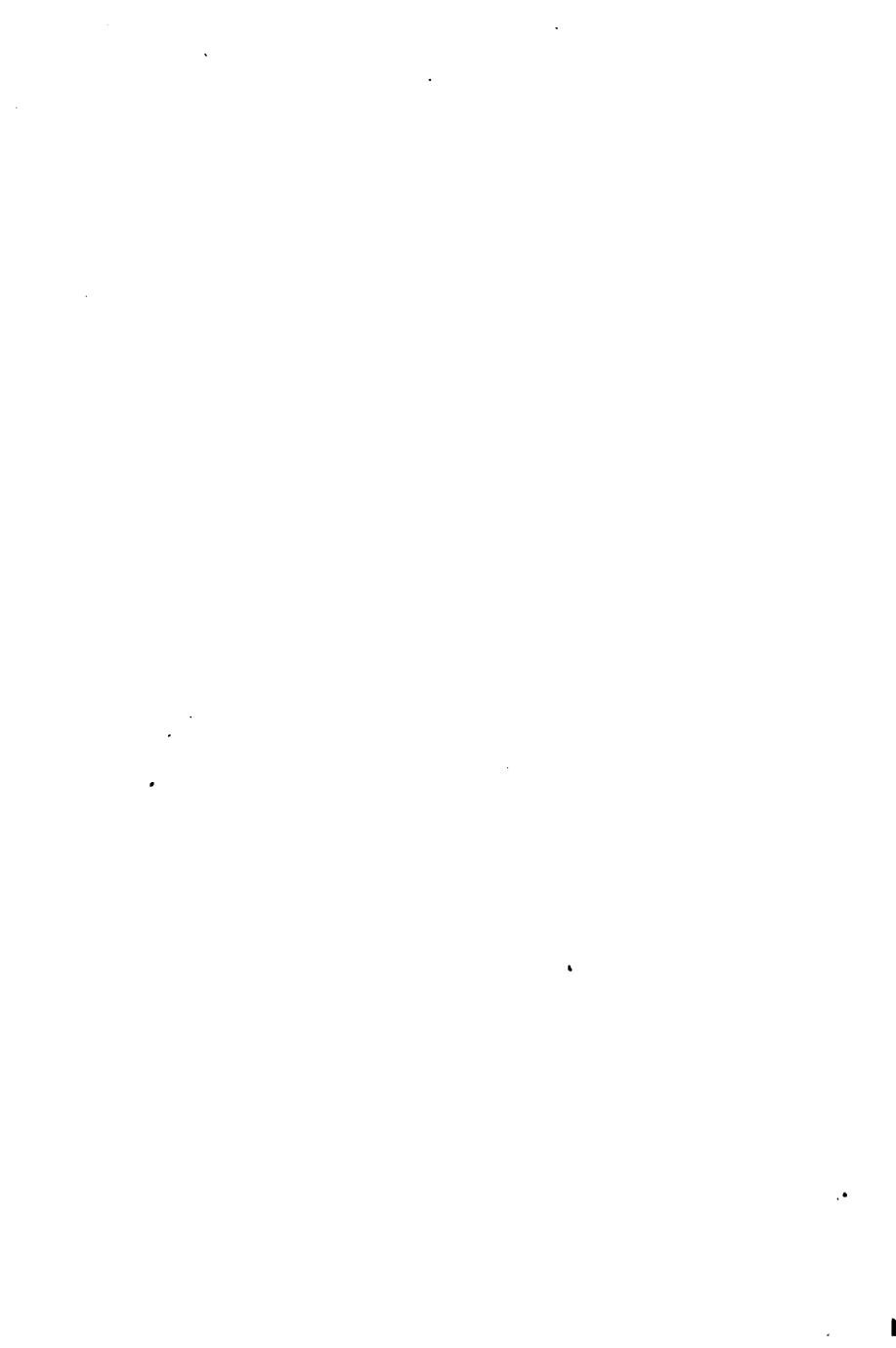
SET E.

§ A.—These two qualities, physical fitness and intelligence, are such as we expect to find in all soldiers in a greater or less degree; they alone do not distinguish the Frenchman from his German rival, but he has two other qualities almost personal to him, on which I would build great hopes of success for his country—they are frugality and gaiety. The former quality is almost essential to a fighting man in these days of massed armies, when as many as a million men may be ranged on either side. The feeding arrangements continually break down, the overloaded trains do not arrive, there is chaos in the camps. All this was the problem Lord Kitchener had to face in South Africa, and a difficult task he found it, even though he had but a quarter of a million men to feed. But Lord Kitchener had to deal with British troops, who are accustomed to a sufficiency of food and to comfortable standards

§ a.—Physically, therefore, the little soldier is extremely fit—and incidentally it should be said that he is never fitter than this month, for the contingent is discharged in September; thus every French soldier has to-day had between ten months' and twenty-two months' continuous training: he is in the pink of condition. It is not, however, on physical merits that the French soldiers must rely, even though they probably be superior in this respect to the heavier German troops. War, as was taught us by our South African experience, is very much a matter for individual intelligence, an adventure where personal energy and initiative in the ranks may mean as much as good generalship. These qualities are essentially French. It would be remarkable if the race which had produced a number of the finest scientists, literary men, and statesmen the world has known, were not generally

of every description ; if he had been in charge of French troops he would have found his difficulties halved, for the Frenchman is accustomed to small and poor rations, mainly a coarse variety of bread and the refuse of the butcher's stall. Milk, butter, eggs, bacon, are unknown to him ; tobacco is a rarity, and the pay a halfpenny a day. It is, therefore, not surprising that the French soldier makes no demands on the commissariat. What is wonderful is that, in spite of these conditions, he should preserve the last and greatest of his gifts—gaiety.

distinguished, for intellect springs immemorially from the masses. The French soldier is notably quick ; he learns with ease from textbooks, and I have seen him on scout duty apply his knowledge with unexpected facility. Quickness is his dominating quality — quickness of movement, quickness of apprehension, and quickness of decision. Thus such matters as the taking of cover, news-gathering, extended order, come almost naturally to him. I have many times been in charge of my company's scouts, and I cannot recall an occasion where they were discovered by the "enemy," while they invariably succeeded in approaching him so near as to exceed their duty.





CHAPTER IV

THE HANDLING OF WORDS

WE have so far dealt with concrete subjects, narrative, descriptive. We must deal soon with the writing down or the discussion of ideas. Common to both types, the concrete and the abstract, are—

SINCERITY OR REALITY OF EXPERIENCE OR OPINION.

LOGICAL SEQUENCE.

WELL-BALANCED TREATMENT.

VIVID PRESENTATION.

FORM.

We have dealt fully with the question of sincerity, and ample exercises have been given for the practice of logical sequence. The importance of balance and of form will be treated later. We are now concerned again, as we were in Chapter II., with the expression, the presentation, or the handling of words. Words do not exist by themselves, they have no independent life. They live or die, are dull or shine, by the context in which we find them. In this respect they are like colours. Take a disc or a diamond of red and place it first upon a background of grass green; next upon a background of sky blue; next upon a sheet of pure white. Can you say that the red has produced upon you, under those different circumstances, always the same, unvarying effect? To me, and I think to you, the

red has actually altered in quality according to its background. The disc has retained its essential redness, but the red has in some subtle way affected me differently. It is so with words. They are gregarious, they live in flocks, they have their families, their friends, their enemies. Sometimes a word will be beautiful because it moves among other words with which it has long been associated—beautiful as a mother among her children, as the young master-farmer among his labourers at a common task. At other times it will appear strange and curious because it moves in strange company. Beware lest you make it ludicrous or vulgar by putting it among words that it hates, or with which it cannot reasonably live.

It is for this reason that you must select or reject a word, that words as words are important. But remember that for the expression of your meaning, of the pictures you wish your reader to see, it is the sentence, or the series of sentences, or the paragraph, that matters.

The exercises that follow are designed to give you practice in the handling of words and sentences.

EXERCISE I.: WORDS.

Put down as many words—(a) nouns, (b) verbs, (c) adjectives, (d) adverbs—as you can remember, which apply specially to—

(1) Mountain scenery. (2) A meadow on a cliff. (3) The coffee-room of an inn. (4) Hunting. (5) A suburban street. (6) The great hall, or big school, of an old public school or of a college. (7) A railway-station. (8) A windy sky. (9) Hot weather in the country. (10) Driving in a motor-car. (11) A man smoking. (12) A motor-omnibus in Oxford Street. (13) A fine, old building. (14) A selfish man. (15) A courageous act.

EXERCISE II.: WORDS.

Complete the rhymes in the following sets of verses, so that the word you choose is good rhyme and good sense. The verses are not given as examples of good poetry. They serve merely to make you seek for suitable words.

- (a) The night drops down upon the street
 Shade after shade. A solemn frown
 Is pressing to
 A deeper —
 The houses drab and —,
 Till each in blackness "touch" and fade,
 Are mixed and melted down.
- (b) In time the strong and stately turrets —;
 In time the rose and silver lilies —;
 In time the monarchs captive are and —;
 In time the sea and rivers are made —.
- * * * * *
- Thus all, sweet fair, in time must have an —
 Except thy beauty, virtues, and thy friend.
- (c) Winter is over, and the ache of the year
 Quieted into rest;
 The torn boughs heal, and the time of the leaf
 is —,
 And the time of the —.
 Winter is over, I see the gentle and —
 And irresistible spring:
 Where is it I carry winter, that I feel no change
 In —? (3 syllables).
- (d) When all is done and said,
 In the end thus you shall —,
 He most of all doth bathe in bliss
 That hath a quiet mind:
 And, clear from worldly cares,
 To deem can be content
 The sweetest time in all this life
 In thinking to be —,

- (e) The grey-green stretch of sandy —,
 Indefinitely desolate;
 A sea of lead, a sky of —
 Already autumn in the air, alas!
- (f) Yes, the year is growing old,
 And his eye is pale and —
 Death, with frosty hand and —
 Plucks the old man by the beard.
 The leaves are falling, falling,
 Solemnly and —;
 Caw! caw! the rooks are —
 It is a sound of woe!
- (g) A strain of music closed the tale,
 A low, monotonous funeral —,
 That with its cadence wild and sweet,
 Made the long saga more —.
- (h) O leave the lily on its stem;
 O leave the rose upon the spray;
 O leave the elder bloom, fair maids,
 And listen to my —.
 A cypress and a myrtle bough
 This morn around my harp you —,
 Because it fashioned mournfully
 Its murmurs in the wind.
- (i) Now the bright morning star, day's —, (3
 syllables)
 Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
 The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
 The yellow cowslip, and the pale —.
 Hail, bounteous May, that doth inspire
 Mirth, and youth, and warm —;
 Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
 Hill and dale doth boast thy —.
 Thus we salute thee with our early —,
 And welcome thee and wish thee long.

EXERCISE III.: WORDS.

Treat each of the following sentences as a separate exercise. Fill in the blank by a word which in your

opinion satisfies the requirements. Give several alternatives where possible, and explain in writing which you prefer. You will be influenced by *meaning*, by *appropriateness*, by *custom*, by *sound*, and by the *length* and *stressing* of the words.

Example.—In a description of a journey over a mountain pass we read: On the saddle there was some coarse grass which was in full — (1), and therefore very nourishing for the horses; also abundance of anise and sow-thistle, of which they are — (2) fond, so we turned them — (3) and prepared to camp.

How can we fill in the blank spaces?

(1) We might write here: *flower*. Plants are in flower; is grass said to flower? Is *in full leaf* better? *Flower* has two syllables, a stressed long syllable and an unstressed short. *In full growth* might do. *Growth* has one long stressed syllable. If *growth* and *flower* are equally good from the point of view of appropriateness, meaning, and custom, which of the two sounds best, **taking the whole sentence into account?** When is grass most nourishing for horses? The word used by the author is a word of one syllable: it is *seed*.

(2) Suggestions: *extremely*, *very*, *most*. The author uses *extravagantly* = five syllables, of which the second has the chief stress. Is the word appropriate?

(3) Suggestions: *out*, *loose*, *forth*, etc. *Forth* is stilted or unnatural. What is the particular phrase almost always used: to turn dogs, horses, animals *out*, or *loose*? If it is to *turn out*, out of what were they turned? *Loose* is the word used by the author.

(i.) Thunder was in the — and a blow coming.
 (ii.) It was the hour of her flight to be made known, and Clara sat in a turmoil of dim — that prepared her nervous frame for a painful blush on her being asked whether she had set her watch —. (iii.) I must have fallen a-wondering while he quoted in a low sonorous —, like a last echo of the great organ, rolling among the —, for as it ceased I came to myself with a start and found his — searching me.
 (iv.) I was driving through the gates of an English

—, encircled by a brilliant — of soldiers, cheered by an interested, good-humoured —. Far back in their —, but standing out above all —, I saw his face, paler and —, more gentle even, and kindly. (v.) A wickeder boy never —; nothing could be done with the —. (vi.) A bat has to catch his — in the air, and he has to catch it in a bad — and, as far as we can tell, though we cannot be — of this, his eyesight is not as good as a swallow's eyesight. This means that he has to pick up a wonderful — in checking his own flight. (vii.) Have you ever thought of the wonderful — which are always going on in the insect —? (viii.) Everybody knows that the hen is a most devoted —, and we shall have something more to — on this subject presently. In the — her devotion results occasionally in some very — situations.

EXERCISE I.: SENTENCES.

Complete the following sentences (one or two or three words will not do):

- (a) I once came suddenly on a brood of young partridges, who could not have been more than a day or two old; they were accompanied by both old ones, and were busily —. (b) At that time the males of many species are extraordinarily pugnacious, and seem to be not only always ready for a fight, but —. (c) The naturalist followed them with the intention of recovering the injured tern, but the whole flock of birds swarmed about him, and as he neared the rock his prize was once more snatched away. This he could have prevented, but it is not surprising to learn that —. (d) The place was alive with men who were putting the finishing touches to —. (e) How could you possibly have let me sit there without —? (f) The tail of the tiger flicked slightly across the curtain and the man hiding by the screen —. (g) The lad suddenly realized that some monstrous thing was advancing slowly towards him.

His first ———. (h) No man can be a good citizen who ———. (i) The writer looked up from his desk. The noise increased, so he stepped to the door ———. (j) The gardener, realizing that the dead tree was a danger, ———. (k) Nothing could be farther ———. You must think me a suspicious man. (l) ——— could behave in such a way. (m) ——— and made off with it. (n) ——— hit him fairly between the eyes. (o) ——— to save himself. (p) Betraying no surprise, I ———. (q) ——— at something it could not understand. (r) ——— ere I could gasp, held me in his toils.

EXERCISE II.: SENTENCES.

Complete the following sentences by clauses or sentences showing the time of day (one word will not do). Use a phrase that will make the time stand out vividly, so that without reference to the clock you can explain yourself perfectly.

(1) ——— when we had reached upper earth once more. (2) As we entered the bay ———. (3) We sailed a little before ———. (4) ———; their arrival was unexpected, and set the whole camp in a stir. (5) ——— they attacked, and found the enemy already awake and ready for them. (6) ——— that even the natives sought shelter from the sun, and that one and all fell into a heavy drowsiness from which alone the evening breeze revived them.

EXERCISE III.: SENTENCES.

Complete the following sentences by a phrase or clause showing the manner in which the thing was done or happened:

(1) The King sent me an offering ———. (2) ——— the Zulu regiments rushed forward to the King. (3) ——— she was able to outstrip her pursuer and to reach the safety of the stone *laager*. (4) To my wife he contrived ——— to explain his feelings on

the subject of our departure. (5) From this expedition he returned to the island ————. (6) We could hear the sound of the surf ————.

EXERCISE IV.: SENTENCES.

Complete the following sentences by a phrase or clause showing the *place* in which or near which the event occurred:

(1) ———— all went barefoot. (2) ———— hung the portrait of the master of the house. (3) The sound of wheels, of busy voices, the crash of machinery, are not known ————. (4) ———— our schooner, now bereft of any breeze, continued to creep in. (5) Thus, as he exposed himself, clad in scarlet, with a signaller markedly waving a flag by his side ———— he was shot down, an easy target for the cool practice of the men ensconced ————. (6) The town was perched ————, so that to a traveller on the road beneath it seemed as if one fell out of one garden into another.

EXERCISE V.

(a) Write twenty sentences of *not less* than ten words and *not more* than thirty words each to express a sentiment of anger, or a situation in which anger is expressed. The word *anger*, or any word similar to it in meaning, must not appear. *Example*: You have broken your promise; you have shown yourself utterly dishonourable. Were it not for the gratitude I owe your father, I should strike you down where you stand. (b) Write twenty sentences to express a sentiment of pleasure. Observe the directions given in Exercise (a). (c) Write twenty sentences to express a sentiment of sorrow, etc. (d) Write ten sentences or scenes to express irony. You will be well advised to write little scenes between two people, one of whom is guilty of some offence, or of gross selfishness or lack of understanding, and the other of whom is attempting by his words to goad the first into realizing the harm or the hurt that he has caused. ["Irony" is defined by the

“Standard Dictionary of the English Language” as “the use of words designed to convey a sense opposite to the literal sense, with the intention of indicating dissent, disapprobation, or contempt.” Look up definitions in two other big dictionaries.] (e) Write ten sentences to express scorn. (f) Write ten sentences to express despair. (g) Write ten sentences to express surprise. (h) Write ten sentences to express fear.

EXERCISE VI.

Alter each of the three following extracts so as to express—(a) Anger on the part of the principal speaker or the hero; (b) pleasure; (c) sorrow (or mock sorrow, as the case may demand); (d) irony; (e) scorn; (f) despair (or mock despair); (g) surprise; (h) fear (or pretended fear).

Treat each as a separate exercise (1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, etc.). Read each extract carefully, and remember that it is intended only to serve as a suggestion and a control. You may rehandle it in whatever manner you please, provided you obtain the result desired. You may convert it into dialogue or a dramatic scene. You may introduce incidents to effect your object—and that is to give an impression of anger, pleasure, sorrow, and so on. You must create the atmosphere.

EXTRACT 1.—He said that he and the other young gentlemen came from London only last night by the mail, on business at the magistrates' meeting, ten miles off, this morning, and that as soon as their business was over, as they had heard a great deal said of Chesney Wold, and really didn't know what to do with themselves, they had come through the wet to see it.

EXTRACT 2.—Why didn't he let me volunteer on Braddock's expedition? I might have got knocked on the head, and then I should have been pretty much as useful as I am now, and shouldn't have ruined myself. [This will have to be altered radically for some of the emotions you are required to express.]

EXTRACT 3.—The crowd is thinning now. Less than ten slaves remain to be sold, and I do not like to think

how many times they must have tramped round the market. Men and women have passed to their several masters; all the children have gone.

EXERCISE VII.

Express each of the following descriptions, etc., in a sentence of *not more* than the number of words indicated in brackets. Your object in this case is to be brief, but also to make the person, thing, idea, or conversation stand out vividly, so as to impress the reader. This is by no means an easy exercise. You should write down two or three sentences for each description, etc., and select the one you prefer. You are strictly limited to the number of words allotted.

1. The female slave is young and pretty. Her big eyes have a look that reminds me of a hare that was run down a few yards from me on the marshes at home. [15.] 2. With one word he bade the little fellow go quickly on his errand, and the youngster felt compelled to obey him. [This has been excellently said in *nine* words.] [15.] 3. The two men who were off to bathe disappeared into a dip in the meadow. [10.] 4. As soon as she felt that she had lost them, she remembered the prison in which her position placed her. [10.] 5. A dwarf in blue breeches put me almost violently into a rickshaw on wheels that looked like spiders' webs, and down the rough road which we had taken four hours to climb he took me at a run, with much shouting, in half an hour. [35.] 6. I followed the river, as it sang its song, through a village of fragile houses that was like a toy, across a rough piece of ground in the valley, till, after crossing a bridge, I found myself among stones covered with lichen, different sorts of thorny undergrowth, and the flowers which showed that spring had come. [40.] 7. "What sort of impression has all this left on your memory?" said the Professor. "I see a tea-girl dressed in fawn-coloured crêpe standing under a cherry-tree, which is in full blossom. Behind her are green pines and two babies, and a bridge rising steeply to its highest point over a

river the colour of bottle-green, running over great blue round stones. In the foreground is a little policeman in badly-fitting clothes, made in Europe. He drinks tea from blue-and-white china cups, standing on a sort of table made of black lacquer. There are fleecy white clouds in the sky, and a cold wind is blowing up the street," I said, making a hasty summary. "Mine differs slightly from yours. I see rather a Japanese boy with a cap flat on top and made in Germany, and an Eton jacket that bags." [110.] 8. In the middle of the room with all the photographs and the looking-glass was a little round table. Over this table was spread a meal, simply prepared, but sufficient in quantity. The things were placed here and there carelessly, without particular intention. When the host had directed that a plate should be taken from under the marmalade in the cupboard, and when they had found a kitchen fork and a knife that was not loose in its handle for the guest, the party sat down and made a meal characterized by frequent disturbances. [70.] 9. Above her face, which was of a vivid pink hue, rose to a great height a sort of tower, covered with flowers and feathers, and fastened to her head by a set of pins, the least of which was like a rapier in length and sharpness. Below her chin sank to the ground a gown whose colour reminded one of damsons ripening. [50.]

EXERCISE VIII.

This exercise will tax the powers of expression and of handling words to their utmost. You are required to write in verse, in sonnet form, the content of each prose passage given below. In Exercise IX. you will be required to alter the prose into triolet form. The following rules for the writing of a good sonnet are in great measure adapted from Mr. William Sharp's "Sonnets of this Century" (Walter Scott, publishers):

(i.) The sonnet must consist of fourteen lines, and each line must consist of ten syllables. (ii.) The first eight lines are called the octave; the last six, the

sestet. (iii.) The octave must follow a prescribed arrangement in the rhyme-sounds—namely, the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines must rhyme on the same sound, and the second, third, sixth, and seventh on another. Thus, if A is one rhyme-sound, B the other, then the succession will be ABBAABBA. (iv.) The sestet must have entirely different rhyme-sounds to A or B. It may run CDDCDC or CDECDE. There are other possible arrangements, but the above are recommended. (v.) The sonnet must have no slovenliness of diction, no weak or indeterminate terminations, no vagueness of conception, and no obscurity. (vi.) It must be absolutely complete in itself. (vii.) The continuity of the thought, idea, or emotion, must be unbroken throughout. (viii.) The end must be more impressive than the beginning.

SUBJECTS.—(a) *Octave*. The poet walks upon a meadow covered with buttercups, shining on the green summer grass, on which is a veil of gossamer. A river rolls its waters, made shallow by the drought, past an old city, and leaves a poisonous mud between the dirty stream and the banks. *Sestet*. The poet's thoughts trouble him, he knows not why; but everything seemed still and nothing was at rest. The sun grew dim, and he thought he heard the faint wind sighing; the pale blue of the sky seemed to shiver as if it were cursed; white, fleecy clouds came hurrying up the sky, and turned black in the west. (b) It is the gloaming of a summer eve, faint and sweet, brightened by a moon recently new, which is beautiful with the light of middle June. The garden-path sounds hard beneath the poet's feet. He wonders if he hears the dew falling on the sleeping forest, or whether it is the sound made by insects creeping to their homes. The many different colours of the day have gone with the waning light, and now nothing but "drowsy" wings are to be heard in the air. The bat is wheeling softly past his door, and leaves his hiding-place as gently as a snowflake, flitting here and there in the dark twilight, going round and round over the same route again and

again. (c) Write a sonnet describing a wave coming on and rising to its crest (octave), and then breaking and spreading smoothly round (sestet). (d) The colour of the sky and the appearance of a town just before the sun rises (octave), and the change everywhere (sestet) when the sun has risen. (e) Write a sonnet in which you compare good writing to a genie coming out of a brass bottle. In the octave you describe the *djinn* imprisoned and released, and in the sestet you make the comparison, showing how dark the imprisoned thought is, and how light and great it becomes when it is released.

EXERCISE IX.

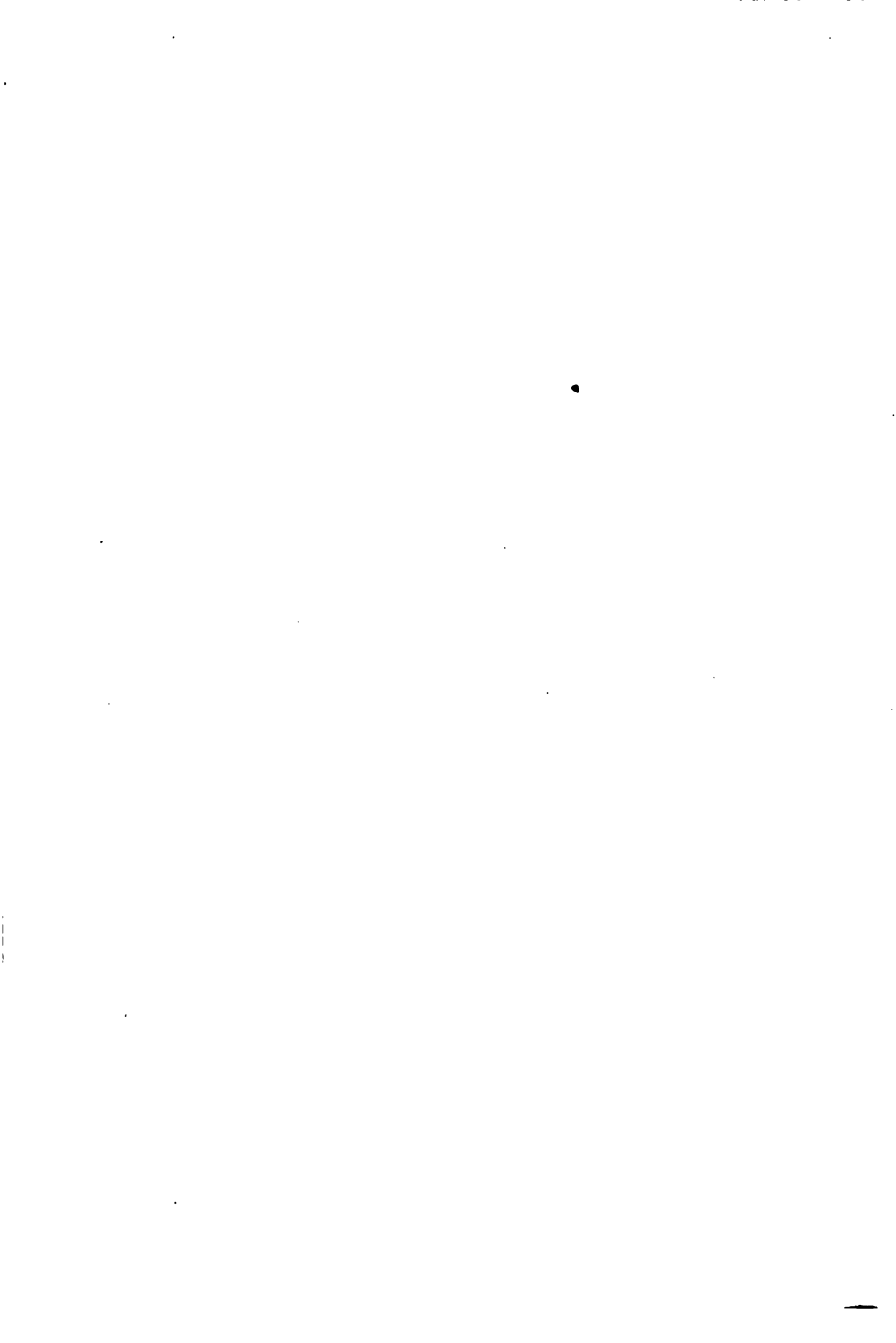
Write in the form of triolets the subjects given below. A *triolet* consists of eight lines. Each line may consist of four, or five, or six, or seven syllables. There are many variations, but you are advised to adopt either a four-syllable line or a six-syllable line. The *whole* of the first line is reproduced as the fourth line, and again as the seventh. The second line is reproduced as the last line. The first, third, fourth, fifth, and seventh lines rhyme on one sound; the second, sixth, and last rhyme on another sound. Here is an example:

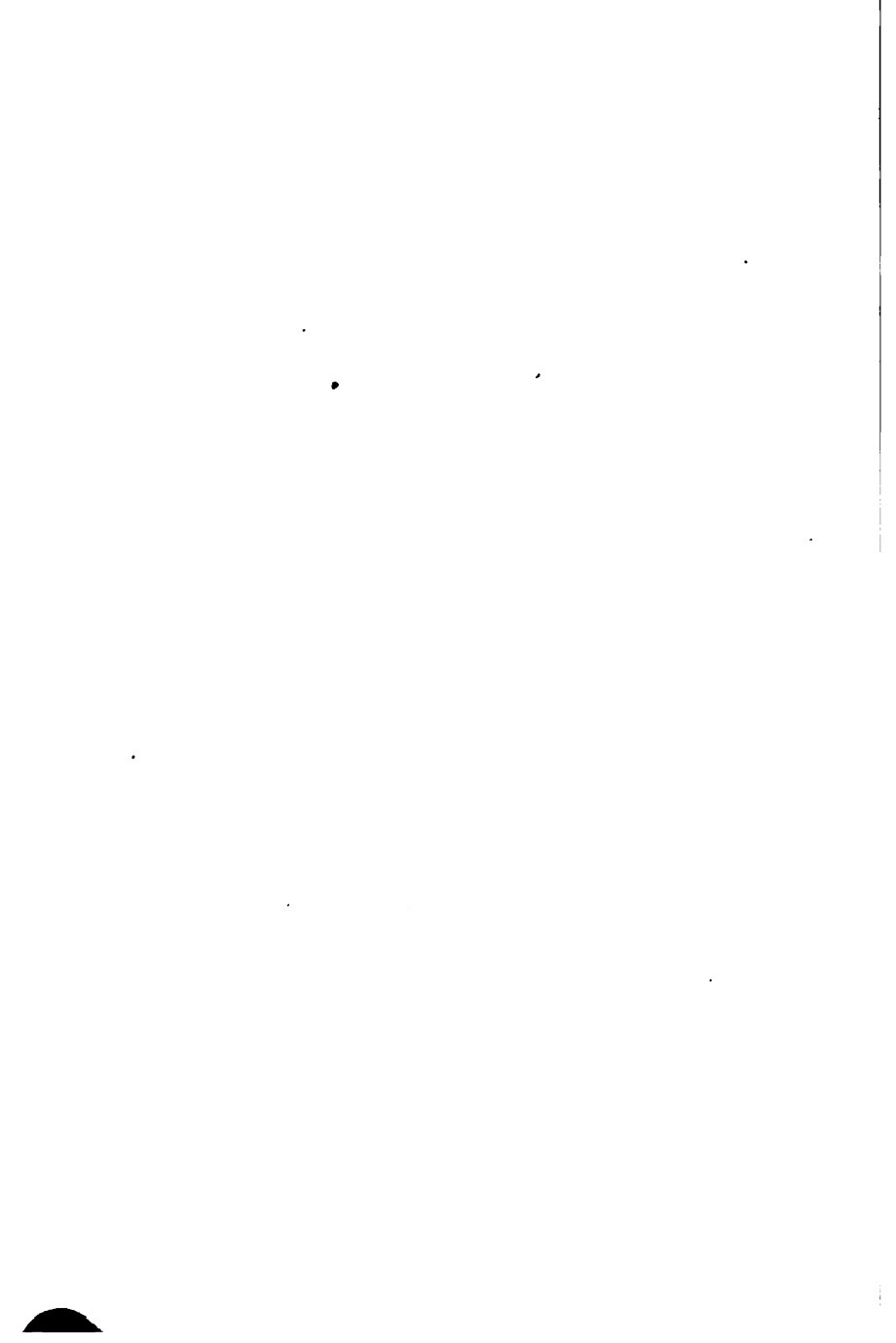
Under the sun
 There's nothing new;
 Poem or pun,
 Under the sun,
 Said Solomon,
 And he said true,
 Under the sun
 There's nothing new.
Love in Idleness.

Note that there must be as little interruption of the sense as possible.

SUBJECTS.—(a) You are late for school. What will you do? (b) Jones threw some bread at you. Let him wait till you catch him. (c) The dog is jumping

up at the cat, who is furious. (*d*) It is going to rain, and you have a new hat on and no umbrella. (*e*) Remember, remember the fifth of November. (*f*) Christmas comes but once a year. (*g*) To-morrow will be Friday. (*h*) The sound of drums; your soldier brother is returning from the front. (*i*) The door bangs downstairs; your brother is returning from a peace conference. (*j*) Britannia rules the waves. (*k*) The sun shines and you are in a good temper.





CHAPTER V

FORM

To F. M. P.

FORM is indispensable to good writing, to good painting, to good architecture or furniture-making or sculpture. In writing, form means the general manner of presenting the subject or the story. The *framework* is part of form, so is *balance* or the relative space you give to any portion of the story or essay, the relative importance you attach to one event or another, or to one fact or another, or to one or other argument. Perspective is also part of form, so is a good beginning and a conclusive end. Before we actually discuss these points, let us read carefully and criticize a short story by Edgar Allan Poe.

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH.

§ i. The "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar, and its seal—the redness and horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body, and especially upon the face of the victim, were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress, and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour.

§ ii. But the Prince Prospero was happy and daunt-

less and sagacious. When his dominions were half-depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress nor egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

§ iii. It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

§ iv. It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. These were seven—an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different, as might have been expected from the duke's love of the *bizarre*. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which

pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass, whose colour varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue—and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange—the fifth with white—the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the colour of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood colour. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire, that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the fire-light that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

§ v. It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and ex-

ceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies), there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

§ vi. But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the duke were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colours and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

§ vii. He had directed, in great part, the movable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*, and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm—much of what has been since seen in “Hernani.” There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies as the madman fashions. There were much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which

might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these—the dreams—writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away—they have endured but an instant—and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away; and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-coloured panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appals; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulged in the more remote gaieties of the other apartments.

§ viii. But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual

before. And the rumour of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

§ ix. In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade licence of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was sprinkled with the scarlet horror.

§ x. When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which, with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed in the first moment with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

§ xi. "Who dares,"—he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him—"who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him—that we may know whom we have to hang, at sunrise, from the battlements!"

§ xii. It was the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly, for the prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

§ xiii. It was the blue room where stood the prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him ; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the prince's person. And while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddened with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry—and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony

clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave ceremonies and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

§ xiv. And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

EXERCISE I.

Let us take to pieces this story. First, paragraph by paragraph. Answer in not more than eight words—

- (1) What is the main interest of paragraph i.? (2) What, on the other hand, is the main interest of paragraph ii.? Do you notice anything else at the end of the paragraph—just one sentence? (3) What is the main interest in paragraph iii.? (4) What is the reason for the existence of paragraph iv.? (5) What is the main interest of paragraph v.? (6) What is the reason for the existence of paragraph vi.? (7) Is there one interest or are there two contrasted points in paragraph vii.? (8) What is the main point in paragraph viii.? (9) What is the value of paragraph ix.? (10) How are the three next paragraphs connected in meaning (paragraphs x., xi., xii.)? About what are they? Answer in one short sentence. (11) What is the chief interest in paragraph xiii.? (12) Supposing you were to put into two words the ruling idea in the last paragraph, what would those two words be?

EXERCISE II.

- (a) Contrast §§ i. and ii. (1) Why does Poe begin with the Red Death in § i. and go on with Prince Prospero's gaiety and defiance in § ii.? (2) Supposing he

had reversed the order of these paragraphs, what change in the effect of the story would have taken place? Why? (b) Compare the first and last paragraphs. What are they about? What is the effect of these two paragraphs being at the very beginning and the very end?

EXERCISE III.

(a) Write down the number of *lines* in each paragraph, thus: § i. — lines; § ii. — lines. (b) Now compare the length of each paragraph with its main subject, thus: § i. — lines; subject: —. Which is the longest paragraph? Try to account for the relative lengths of the paragraphs. Paragraph i. is short, but the subject dominates the whole story. How, then, has Poe made up for its brevity?

EXERCISE IV.

(a) What is the most dramatic point in the story? In which paragraph does it come, and how far down? (b) Examine closely the manner in which the author leads up to this dramatic point. Write down the chain of events which lead up to it? (c) What have the descriptions of (1) the revels, (2) the rooms, (3) the clock, (4) the costumes, (5) the costume of the Red Death, to do with this main dramatic point? (d) How long does the writer go on after he has reached this point?

EXERCISE V.

(a) Criticize the beginning of the story. What is the effect of (1) the first few words, (2) the first three sentences, (3) the first paragraph? (b) Criticize the end. What is the effect of the whole paragraph? Of the first two sentences of the paragraph? Of the last sentence in the paragraph?

Let us now lay down a few general rules for narrative.
I.—There must be a **dramatic** or **vivid beginning**. This must excite the interest and hold the attention

of the reader. It must not be too long, nor prosy, nor must it beat about the bush. Come to grips with your story, however simple your story is. Present your characters. Put in with a few bold outlines the scene. If the scene is an essential part of the narrative, if it is necessary to create a certain atmosphere, then come back to it later. In your beginning a broad, bold touch is necessary. Let your first lines, or the first paragraph, bear upon the dramatic climax of the story, the important portion, the point of the narrative. Do not moralize. It is only the great writer, who has lived and experienced, who may begin a story with a lecture or an exposition.

II.—Work up to the climax of the story: the conflict of personality with personality, or with an event, or with an opinion or a law. Let each succeeding fact or description lead up and up to your climax. Never drop back to the level of your beginning. Sometimes you will have to put in succeeding sentences or paragraphs events which took place at the same time. But see to it that these events all lead in the same direction, so that their effects, as it were, will *meet* at a certain point. That point is your dramatic climax. Where there is a succession let the effect be cumulative. In the slang phrase, "pile it on." See to it, also, that each paragraph grows naturally out of each preceding paragraph, or is in *strong contrast* (not contradiction) to it.

III.—Let the end of the story come as quickly as possible after the climax. There must be a solution or a resolution. The climax is *not* the end of the story. The end of the story is the explanation of how the problem involved in the climax was solved. The climax is a *knot*. You may unpick it or cut it. The unpicking or the cutting is the end of the story. Let the end be conclusive, clear, to the point. No doubt must remain in the reader's mind. The last sentence especially must round off the whole story.

The writing of a story clusters, then, about some central point. About some central point—a keen delight, a keen disappointment, the attainment of an

object, a fine view, an amusing incident—must the writing of a description cluster. The central point may be a mood: a feeling of horror, of sorrow, of happiness, of gaiety. To the central point everything must tend. Once you have reached that point or achieved your object, away with you! As quickly as you decently can, end your story or your description. Beware if you delay. Beware of the unnecessary fourth or fifth act. It will slay, in the opinion of your audience, the whole play.

The writing of a story is like the climbing of a mountain. You are set upon reaching the top. Towards the top your face is turned. Thither your thoughts fly. Up there is the view, or the difficulty conquered, or the setting of the sun. Once there, your interest wanes. Come down by the quickest and safest path; you have done what you set out to do.

EXERCISE VI.

(1) Choose *any* subject you like for a story. (2) Put down on paper all ideas which suggest themselves to you about this story. (3) Rearrange them in logical sequence or in parallels where absolutely necessary. (4) Make up your mind as to which is the dramatic centre of the story. (5) Write a strong, vivid, interesting beginning. (6) Lead up to your climax. (7) Get done as soon as possible. (8) Write a strong ending which serves as a sort of general comment (not *commentary*) to the whole, and gives, as it were, the prevailing tone of your story.

When you have done the work, lay it by for a few hours or a day. Take it up again and read it aloud. Do the events seem real? Do the people in it move? Have you suggested the scenery? Is there too much scenery? What have you done to suggest an atmosphere? Now examine the amount of space you have given to each part of the story. How long is your first paragraph? Is it long enough, or too long in proportion to the treatment of other paragraphs? Consider the central point of each paragraph, and consider, again,

the space you have allotted to each. Have you laboured any point or any description too much? or have you perhaps dismissed some point too quickly, so that your reader may be puzzled as to your meaning? If so, rewrite the part that does not satisfy you. Do you feel that the story moves irresistibly to the climax, so that each succeeding fact adds to the interest and leads on and upwards? Is the climax, as you have written it, reasonable? Is it the logical outcome of the facts leading to it? Is it real? Is it vivid? Is your solution logical? Is the ending brief, dramatic, and to the point? You have been told to be dramatic! Have you made the mistake of being melodramatic? Is your story rather a burlesque? If so, tone it down. Great simplicity and a straightforward manner are intensely dramatic if the incidents lend themselves to it. Remember that dramatic situations are more often than not created by the confronting of two conflicting conditions. The dramatic situation is not to be written down. It is something that arises out of the silence between two sayings. See to it that you describe vividly the incidents. A great deal of shouting and rushing up and down the stage are not a dramatic situation, but such a case as the following is dramatic: (1) A wife steals money from her husband's cash-box. (2) He comes in and sees her. The dramatic sentiment would in all probability be expressed by the reader and by the actor by a *pause*.

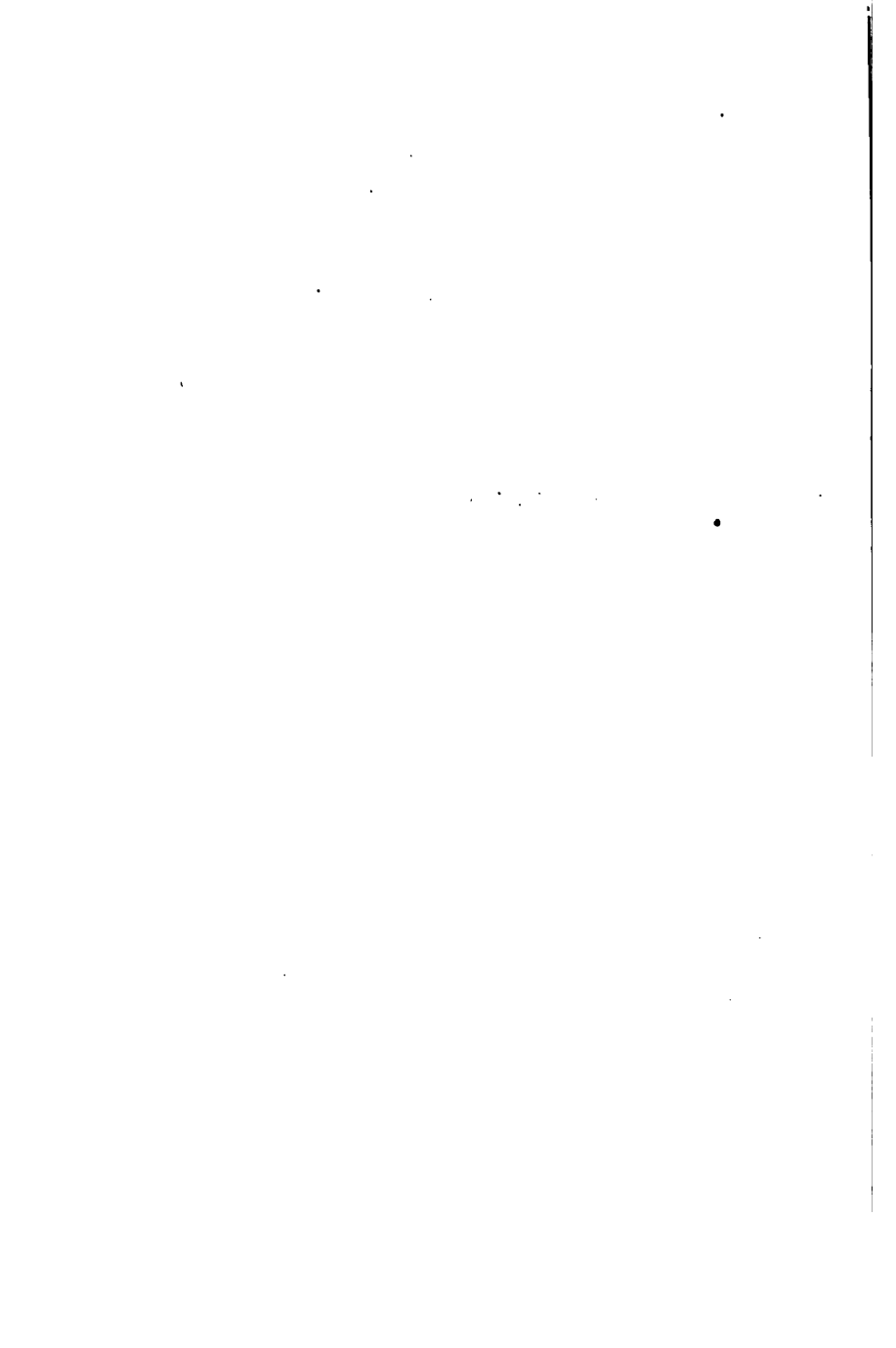
EXERCISE VII.

Write a description of scenery. (a) What will replace the *dramatic climax* in this? Will you not select one portion to be described more minutely, more vividly than any other? In what relation will all the remaining writing stand to this central point? (*Central* here does not mean in the mathematical centre of your description.) It means the point to which everything converges.) Answer first these questions *in writing*. (b) Write the description itself. *Paint, sculpt, mould*. Make your words live.

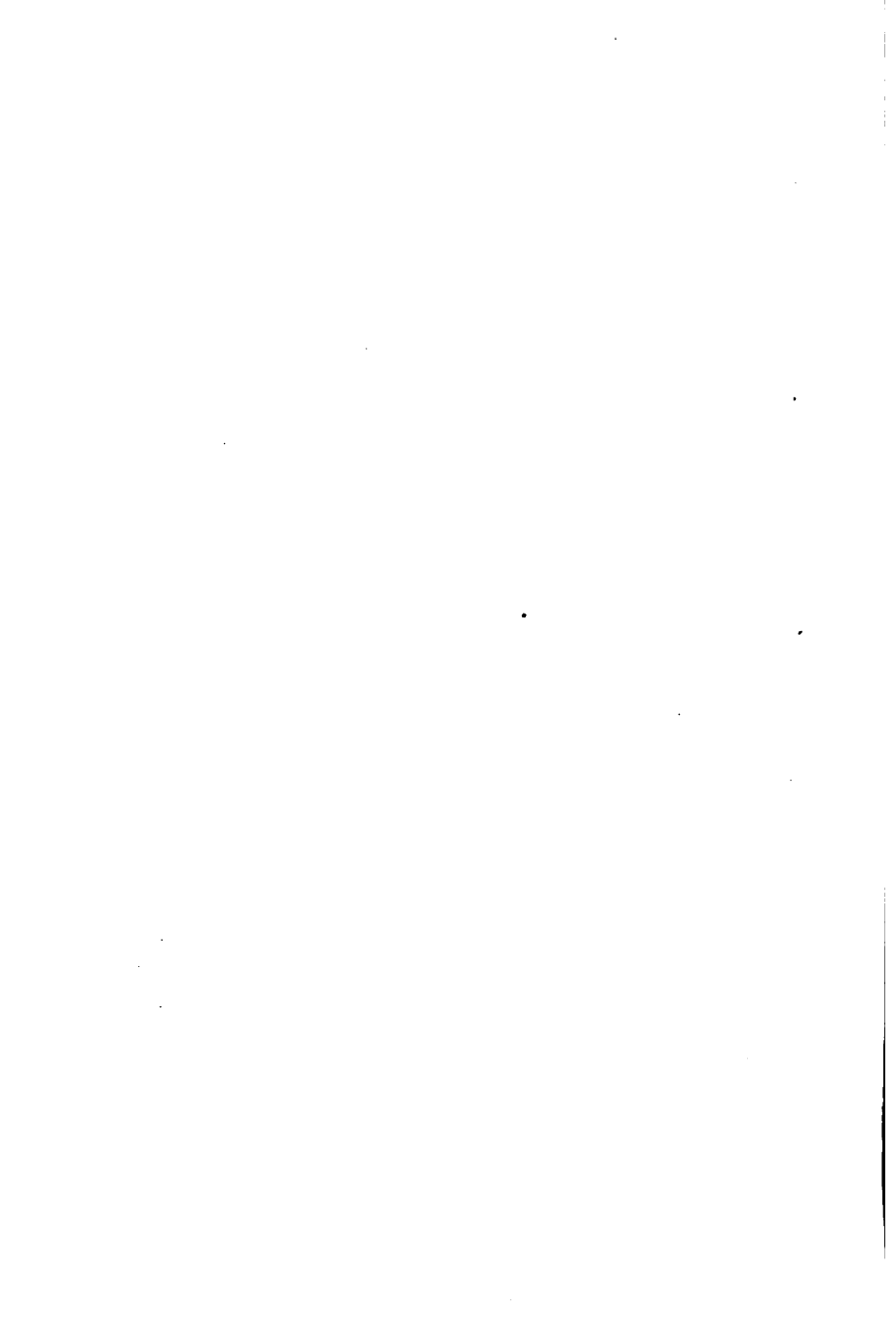
EXERCISE VIII.

Write a description of some quiet, homely event—a visit to town or country, the arrival of old friends from the Colonies, or some other topic. Which do you intend to make your central point? How shall you begin? Set down your incidents in logical sequence. What space, what importance, will you give to each incident? How will you lead up to the main incident? How will you end? Give colour, and sound, and movement to what you have written. Go over it all again. Is it grey, dull, sluggish? Then rewrite, cut out, or add, as the case may be.

Writing is not acquired except by hard work, untiring patience, and perseverance.







CHAPTER VI

FORM—*Continued*

CRITICAL EXERCISES.

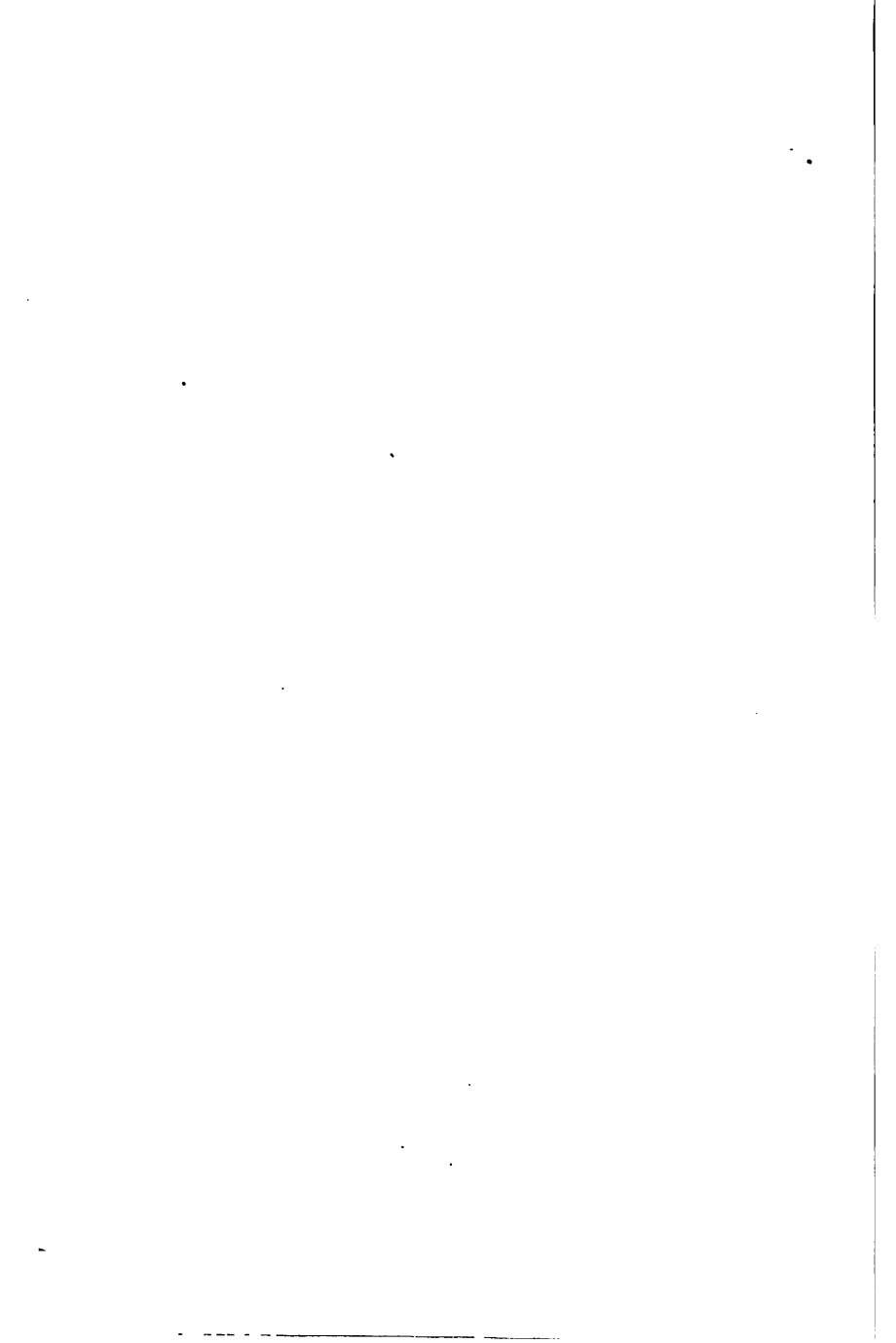
FORM, as I use the word, is not different in prose and verse. The inner details are included in the word *style*—a difficult thing to teach, or even to talk about. Style we deal with elsewhere. In this chapter attention is concentrated upon the *form* of a few prose passages and poems.

In the following exercises *all* answers should be given in writing. Each exercise must be treated separately.

Give in all cases—(1) A very brief summary of the whole, not more than fifty words. (2) A brief summary of each paragraph, the summary in each case to be of a length proportionate to that of the paragraph. (3) A plan or skeleton of the whole, of such a kind that only a little expansion would be necessary to fill it out to the same size as the whole. (4) A reasoned statement showing how the author leads up to his main point, and a criticism of his success or lack of success. (5) A list of any portions of the narrative in which the author appears to you to have been (*a*) particularly vivid, (*b*) rather unsuccessful. (6) Criticize the *endings* of all the extracts submitted, in relation to the climax of the story and to the whole story.

The following extracts are to be treated in succession in the manner above prescribed. Each exercise will thus consist of *six* parts.

(i.) The Stevenson story in Chapter I. (ii.) The lace story from "Cranford" (Chap. I.). (iii.) The extract from "Our Village" (Chap. I.). (iv.) The extract from "My Study Windows" (Chap. I.). (v.) The Dickens letter (Chap. I.). (vi.) The conjuring performance in "Cranford" (Chap. I.). (vii.) The De Quincey story (Chap. I.). (viii.) Coleridge's "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner." (ix.) Tennyson's "Ænone." (x.) Browning's "Incident of the French Camp."



CHAPTER VII

THE DISCUSSION SUBJECT

So far we have dealt with narrative and description only. It will be well to keep in mind all the points raised in the preceding chapters. In any kind of writing these points are equally important. In writing a discussion or essay, however, we are faced with ideas, emotions, and arguments, rather than concrete happenings or description. Must the treatment of such subjects be different from the treatment of narrative? It must be the same.

(1) The subject must be one with which we are familiar. If we have no experience of it, it is dishonest to attempt to discuss it. (2) We must make sure of the meaning of the subject. (3) After we have thought it over we shall find that we have a certain point of view, and that we have formed certain conclusions based on that point of view. That point of view is, as it were, the keynote of our writing. The main conclusion corresponds to the dramatic climax in the narrative. (4) The logical sequence of our arguments must be rigorously preserved. (5) Our ideas must be vividly expressed, so that the reader, even when he disagrees with us, must see the life and reality (from our point of view) of our feelings on the matter. (6) The beginning must not be in the form of a lengthy presentation. We must get to the discussion at once, and our

first words must be of a nature to interest the reader. (7) The last paragraph is the most important part of the discussion. It should make our conclusion clear beyond any manner of doubt. (8) The last sentence is the most important part of the last paragraph. (9) In the discussion we must realize that certain things are more important than others, and to the more important we must give more forcible or a longer treatment. (10) The abstract subject must be made as concrete as possible.

Before we discuss these points in detail it will be well for you to write a discussion composition on one of the following subjects.

EXERCISE I.

Keeping in mind the points made in connection with narrative composition, discuss one of the following subjects :

(1) That it is waste of time to learn to read well aloud. (2) That it is better to learn to speak and write one's own language well than to learn a foreign language. (3) That it is not useful to be able to speak well in public. (4) That it is more agreeable to live in a flat in town than to live in a country cottage with a large garden. (5) Compare two books of adventure you have read, and state which you like best.

Keep your composition by you, and examine it in the light of what you will read below.

I. THE SUBJECT MUST BE FAMILIAR TO US.

In the earlier part of this book, stress was laid upon the need for personal experience of the incident or scene we were describing. Let us examine this again. If we say that we must write only about things with which we are familiar, we are supposing that we *might* write about subjects with which we are not familiar. Is that

possible? Well, it is possible that we might be *asked* to write about subjects with which we are not familiar, or about which it is impossible to think properly in a short time. If the subject was "Describe a diamond-mine," and we had never seen a diamond-mine nor any pictures of a diamond-mine, and had never heard anyone describe or talk about a diamond-mine, we should lay down our pens without attempting to write. Or, again, if we had never seen such a mine, but had heard talk or read descriptions of one, we should put together this second-hand information and write a description at second hand. Now, this kind of writing is really dishonest. We are taking the views of other people, possibly not even first-hand views, and are giving them as our own. So much for the concrete subject.

When we come to the abstract subject we are in still greater danger of being intellectually dishonest. Supposing a boy of fourteen were told to write an essay on "Imagination." He would have no store of thoughts about imagination or cognate subjects. If he were given three months in which to think about the subject, he might, perhaps, arrive at some general ideas on the subject, but at that age one does not think about abstract subjects as abstract subjects, and to base a discussion on imagination on concrete examples is by no means easy. In all probability the writer would quote other people's views (sometimes without acknowledgment), or, if he were exceptionally developed, give examples of imaginative work. But that would not be an essay on imagination. It would, in the first case, be dishonest writing, or, in the second case, it would be a catalogue.

On the other hand, it is quite fair that we should be asked to read a book and give our views of it, or that we should be made to think about some part of our life—things we have done and are doing, or are likely to do; thoughts that we have had; feelings, emotions (though we may never have classified them); discipline or laws which affect our general behaviour. But we shall be dishonest in our treatment of such subjects if we do not compel ourselves to see all round the question, to think

of the discussion subject from many points of view, to look at it from many sides.

That brings us to the second point.

2. WE MUST MAKE SURE OF THE MEANING OF THE SUBJECT WE DISCUSS.

Whenever possible, it is good to read out the subject aloud, then to jot down any ideas, examples, illustrations, quotations in verse or prose that bear upon the subject, anecdotes which occur to us. Supposing the subject were that set by Mr. P. J. Hartog at a recent examination (I quote from memory): "You are to imagine yourself Governor of an island which has just been devastated by an earthquake. The Admiral commanding the squadron of a foreign Power has landed marines and bluejackets to aid in relief work and in restoring order. When the work is done and their presence is no longer required, the Admiral shows no inclination, in spite of polite hints, to withdraw his men. What would you do to get his men off the island?" It is your business to set forth your actions in writing in a clear, vivid, coherent narrative, giving various ideas which occurred to you as methods of getting rid of the Admiral, showing why you rejected some and why you retained the method which you eventually employed. What would be the limitations of your subject? Would you not find it necessary to be rid of the foreigners? Tact would be required, or you would certainly offend the Admiral and bring about an unpleasant international incident. Right is on your side, but it is well to avoid telling him that in so many words. You must get rid of him, but you must part friends.

These are only a very few of the notions which you will find it necessary to discuss with yourself. The best of all discussions as a preparation for an essay is a debate between yourself and several others. You will then hear their views; you may be able to detect the fallacies in their arguments, or find that some of your own arguments are not as good as you thought them.

But it is more often than not impossible to discuss the matter aloud with one's friends. In that case take a large sheet of paper, divide it into two columns, put *For* at the head of one column and *Against* at the head of the other. Then imagine—try to imagine—arguments opposed to yours. Almost every positive statement can be met by a negative statement. Very strong positive statements rather invite equally strong negative statements.

EXERCISE II.

Put down in the form of clear but brief notes all the ideas, anecdotes, quotations, arguments, comparisons, which occur to you on the following subjects when you attempt to consider their meaning and their bearing. Pay special attention to all possible arguments against your views.

(a) Every boy should join the Boy Scouts. (b) All girls over twelve years of age should learn French. (c) All Englishmen should learn German. (d) Games should not be compulsory. (e) You are to imagine that you are head-master of a school in the loneliest part of Natal, on the Zululand frontier. The Zulus are discontented, and may at any moment rebel. Such a rebellion might mean the hideous killing of many people in your town. Now, the grass in the playground of your school is cut by low-caste Hindu convicts. The Zulus despise the Hindus, and lose no chance of showing it. In charge of these convicts there is a Zulu policeman. One of the boys in your school amuses himself by throwing stones at the Zulu policeman, in order to make the convicts laugh. The Zulu is armed with a handful of throwing assegais and a knobkerry. The matter is complicated by the fact that in your town there is a strong anti-Zulu feeling, and that you are suspected by the townspeople of pro-Zulu sympathies. Your position depends upon the good-will of the townspeople. What would you do? [Read the case of the Governor and the foreign Admiral again, with the remarks that follow.] (f) You have very few

friends. One of them has done something which you consider wrong. You feel it your duty to tell him so and to set right his injustice, but you do not wish to lose his friendship. What has he done? What will you do?

More difficult subjects, which may perhaps be outside your experience. If they are quite unfamiliar to you, do not attempt to invent ideas, but state simply, "Beyond my experience."

(1) Votes for women. Discuss this. (2) All men over eighteen should have a vote. (3) It should be permitted to all to walk at will in woods and fields and parks (enclosed cultivated gardens excepted), and to pick wildflowers, but it should be a punishable offence to take up roots (of primroses, daffodils, violets, etc.) and to damage trees. (4) Every man and woman should have a hobby.

3. THINKING OUT A SUBJECT.

Sometimes we look at a subject we have to discuss and with which we are, generally speaking, familiar; but we think we can find nothing to say about it. This is often due to laziness of mind or to diffidence. Let us see whether there is any way of finding "something to say about it."

There is one method which is *quite wrong*. That is, to go to an encyclopædia or to books of reference to get other people's views. [See my remarks *passim* on intellectual dishonesty.] But we can often find *concrete* illustrations of an abstract subject in the form of a story or an anecdote. Suppose we are discussing the subject of CAPITAL and LABOUR (a subject which is going to be the greatest practical subject of the next twenty years in the Empire and in Europe and America), we might at first say, "Capital and Labour. I can think of nothing about that."

Can you not? First, what does *capital* mean here, and *labour*? Why are they put together in a contrast? linked in one title? Is there a contrast? or is Labour simply a part of Capital, as "a hen and her chicks,"

“a table and its legs”? Can you think of any stories in the newspapers of strikes, or of a capitalist suffering at the hands of his workmen, or of a working-man suffering terribly because he was unable with his wages to keep his family fed and clothed? As soon as you have begun to think in this way, you will find that you have begun to have views on the subject, and *views* lead to *arguments*, so that the outlines of your composition begin to form in your mind. Your essay is begun.

EXERCISE III.

Give, if you can, for each of the following subjects at least *one* anecdote or illustration of a concrete happening:

(a) War is disastrous to the country in which it takes place. (b) War calls forth some of the best qualities in men and women. (c) War calls forth some of the worst characteristics of men. (d) Conscription is good for the men of the nation. (e) Conscription is bad for the nation. (f) Hospitals should be supported by private charity. (g) Hospitals should be maintained by the State. (h) It is bad for a beggar to give him alms.

EXERCISE IV. (*Read the example given below.*)

Write down six anecdotes or very short stories of things which have happened to you, thus:

(1)

(2)

etc., and opposite each story put down a subject-title which suggests itself to you as arising out of the story.

EXAMPLE.

(1) I have very little time to mow my lawn. I read in a well-known paper that guinea-pigs supplied a long-felt want in gardens, that they ate the grass and destroyed plantains, dandelions, daisies, and other

Subject-Titles of Possible Essays.

“The journalist is a public nuisance.”

“More hurry, less speed.”

“The influence of newspapers on the public.”

plant nuisances in a lawn. I bought a guinea-pig. It spent most of its time in escaping. It ate valuable herbaceous plants in the border. Sometimes it ate the grass. It left the plantains, daisies, and dandelions untouched. It bit my finger, and chattered with rage at me. Finally it bolted. I lost my pains, my plants, my time, and had to return to the slow but effective mower.

Before we leave this section there is still one thing to be said. Though it is quite wrong to go to an *encyclopædia* or a reference-book to reproduce merely, it is quite right to read any good novels or plays about that subject, and to read carefully good newspaper news columns and articles and magazine articles. Thus, on Irish Home Rule you might read Mr. Bernard Shaw's "John Bull's Other Island" and articles in papers *for* and *against*. But you must read several, as many as possible.

3. (a) After we have thought over the subject, we shall find we have a certain point of view, and (b) we shall have come to a definite conclusion.

(a) Our point of view will be a *general* feeling of agreement or disagreement. It will be due, perhaps, to the consideration of the subject as one that fits in or does not fit in with our attitude towards life. But if we wish to be exceptionally sincere, our point of view will be formed by considering the subject on its merits only. That point of view must inform all we write on the subject. I mean that we must so compose that the reader, however much he disagrees, will *feel* that in all we have written that way of looking at the subject has always been present and is always the same. (b) In the main we have one final conclusion to which we get

by hard reasoning, by a chain of arguments all tending in the same direction, by an ascending series of arguments, each of which strengthens those which have gone before. People will think me old-fashioned for suggesting that a close study of, say, twenty of Euclid's theorems and problems is a valuable adjunct to close reasoning. I believe this to be true. Read also Plato's "Banquet" in a fine English translation, or any of Plato's dialogues. We must get inside our own minds and drive our ideas, our emotions, out into the light. Until a vague thought, an emotion, a prejudice, has been formulated in words, spoken aloud or written down, we cannot be sure that we mean to have and to hold that thought. Often when we are driven to say aloud something that we imagine that we think, we find that in its expressed form, clear cut and distinct, it is not true to our general beliefs. It was not thought out in relation to all our other thoughts. If we are obstinate (which is a gross form of intellectual dishonesty), we shall pretend that we did mean what we said, that we are not inconsequent, that we seriously believe this new and inconsequent statement is in keeping with our well-established ideas. But if we are honest, we shall ask ourselves why the new and contradictory statement is not in keeping with our general beliefs; whether we ought to reconsider our statement or our general position. Or it may be that it is merely the wording of the statement that is wrong. Then we must think it out again until we find the words which will convey exactly what we mean.

Now, that final conclusion which you will set forth in a vivid, cogent sentence corresponds to the solution of the climax in a story. Read again the chapter on the "Masque of the Red Death."

EXERCISE V.

(1) Read four books new to you (treat each book as a separate exercise) and state what your final conclusion is in one sentence which summarizes both your view of liking or disliking and your reason. (1b) Write a

composition discussing the book in such a manner that your conclusion on the matter comes in the place of the dramatic climax in a narrative. (2) Look at four pictures, two coloured and two uncoloured. Set forth your like or dislike, with the summary of your reason, putting this sentence in the same position as the climax in a story. Treat each picture as a separate subject.

EXERCISE VI.

(1) Read carefully the following extract (from Walter Pater's "Renaissance"*) , which is complete in itself. It speaks of the famous picture stolen from the Louvre in August, 1911. You will have seen dozens of reproductions of this "Monna Lisa" or "La Gioconda." Get one if you can, and write what you think about the picture in the form of an essay. Many people dislike the "Gioconda."

"La Gioconda" is, in the truest sense, Lionardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness only the "Melancholia" of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least. As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. In that inestimable folio of drawings, once in the possession of Vasari, were certain designs by Verrocchio, faces of such impressive beauty that Lionardo in his boyhood copied them many times. It is hard not to connect with these designs of the elder, by-past master, as with its germinal principal, the unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something sinister in it, which plays over all Lionardo's work. Besides, the picture is a portrait. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams; and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy

* By kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought? By what strange affinities had she and the dream grown thus apart, yet so close together? Present from the first, incorporeal in Lionardo's thought, dimly traced in the designs of Verrocchio, she is found present at last in *Il Giocondo's* house. That there is much of mere portraiture in the picture is attested by the legend that by artificial means, the presence of mimes and flute-players, that subtle expression was protracted on the face. Again, was it in four years and by renewed labour never really completed, or in four months and as by stroke of magic, that the image was projected?

The presence that thus so strangely rose beside the waters is expressive of what in the way of a thousand years man had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which "all the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed? All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the Middle Age with its spiritual ambition and imaginary loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded

the changing lineaments and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

(2) Try to break up the Pater extract into a beginning, an argument, and an end. Where does his conclusion come? How does he make you feel his point of view? What is the deduction he draws from the picture? Write your answers and your reasons in a coherent form, which will read as a continuous criticism, such as you might find in a good daily paper or a magazine.

(3) Read carefully the following complete article by Mr. M. T. H. Sadler (republished by permission of the Editors of "Rhythm"). It is on a book of letters written by the artist, van Gogh. Treat it in the same way as you treated the critique by Walter Pater. See question (2).

THE LETTERS OF VINCENT VAN GOGH.

The letters of a great man may be of biographical or of psychological interest, or of both combined. Stevenson's letters, partly from their contents, partly as a result of careful editing, have the double value. Vincent's are almost pure psychology. The fantastic arrangement chosen by Margarete Mauthner, who has edited the German edition, tends to obscure what little biographical information the letters contain. There is one date only in the whole collection, and the correspondence is arbitrarily arrayed in blocks according to the recipient. First, a group of letters to Vincent's brother Theodore, the picture-dealer; then a group to Emile Bernard; then more to Theodore, and so on. No attempt whatever is made to show the place from which each letter is written; this one has to gather, as best one can, from the contents of the letters themselves.

But editorial incompetence cannot lessen the interest

and value of the letters as revelations of a wonderful personality. They give just the same feeling as many of Vincent's pictures, the feeling of a tortured soul who lived for art and for nothing else, whose passionate vision saw a new whirl in Nature, a new meaning in colour, whose searching intensity seemed to burn its way into things from the side of the future.

But it was colour which meant more to him than anything. Colour ran through his life like a devouring flame, brilliant but consuming. "I know for sure that I have the feeling for colour and will acquire it more and more, that painting is in my very marrow." Again and again throughout the letters, in his descriptions of Nature, it is the colour which strikes him most. Even in grey, Northern Europe he sees a wonderful brilliance and variety of tint. In one of the early letters, written from Holland, when still under the influence of the Hague School, he writes :

"Last night I was busy painting the gently rising ground in the wood, which is quite covered with dry, shrivelled beech-leaves. It was an expanse of every shade of red-brown, the shadows of the trees striking across it, like stripes. . . . And I noticed as I worked how much light there still was in the darkness. One must suggest the light and also the glow, in order not to lose the depths of rich colour. . . . Beech-trunks grow here, which in a clear light are dazzling green, while in the shadow they appear a vivid green-black. Behind the trunks, beyond the red-brown floor, one could see the sky, a perfectly clear blue . . . and in front of it a dim film of green and a network of stems and yellow leaves. . . . The figures of a few wood-gatherers creep about like dark shadows. A woman's white bonnet . . . stands out from the deep red-brown of the earth. The dark silhouette of a man appears on the edge of the wood. . . . That is my description of Nature. How far in my sketches I have reproduced the feeling I do not know, but I do know how deeply I was impressed with the harmony of green, red, black, yellow, blue, and grey."

Later on the brighter colours of the South laid their spell on him. Describing a view of Arles he has painted, he writes :

"Of the town itself one sees only a few red roofs and a tower, standing among some green fig-trees quite in the background ; over the whole is a thin strip of blue sky. The town is surrounded by meadows covered with dandelions, like a yellow sea. Right in the foreground a ditch cuts across the fields, full of purple iris. . . . What about that for a motif ! A sea of yellow flowers, with the gash of purple, and in the background the charming little town."

I could go on multiplying quotations to the same effect, but there is no need. Colour so filled his mind that he got to see moods expressed by different colours and combinations of colour. His daring juxtapositions became almost a system, despite his constant assertions to the contrary. Blue must be accompanied by yellow, red by orange. In his Arlesian period, the great period of all, the problem of yellow held his attention, and yellow for him grew to express "love."

"I want to paint," he writes, "the portrait of an artist friend, a man who dreams great dreams, who works, as the nightingale sings, because it is his nature to do so. The man must be fair. I want the love I bear him to appear in the picture. I shall, as a beginning, try to make the likeness as true as possible. But the picture will not be done then. To finish it, I shall proceed to colour it quite arbitrarily. I shall exaggerate the blondness of the hair into shades of orange, chrome, pale lemon yellow. Behind the head I shall paint, instead of the dull cottage wall, a plain background of the richest blue, as intense as ever I can, and by this simple contrast, the fair head shining out against this rich blue background will have the mysterious effect of a star in a deep blue sky."

Another example of this same use of yellow is supplied by M. Bernard's assertion that Vincent intended to paint on either side of the figure of the "Berceuse" "two great golden suns to symbolize the

power of love." The picture was to hang in a sailors' home at Marseilles or at Sainte-Marie.

Meier-Graefe, in his monograph on the artist, goes further into the question of Vincent's colour symbolism, and to this scholarly study I would refer the curious.

Largely as a result of this preoccupation with colour, there is the striking fact that Vincent alone of the leaders of Fauvism, dead or living, owed anything to Pointillism. The renaissance of line had comparatively little appeal to him, and, despite his frequently expressed admiration of the Japanese, flat colour washes seldom appear in his work. He felt the beauty of design as strongly as any, but it was more by colour than by form that he sought to attain it. There is only one mention in these letters—and that right at the end—of any attempt at simplification, the aim which engrossed Cézanne and Gauguin. "I am only now beginning to try a simplified technique, which could not perhaps be called 'impressionist.'" He clung to the Impressionists with a devotion and eagerness which is very striking, inventing plans for their better advertisement, consulting his brother about their exhibitions, and always with hardly a word of himself or his advancement. He had a personal affection for Seurat and Anquetin, and believed strongly in the value of their Pointillism. There is, however, one important fact which distinguishes the Pointillism of Vincent from the mechanical stippling of the Neo-impressionists—it is never used to create illusion, and this consideration definitely attaches Vincent to Fauvism, style himself what he may. The Neo-impressionists used their technique to give an effect of light; they were realists. Vincent strove for brilliance of colour as a means to design and, as has been seen, to suggest deeper meaning. Then, also, his strokes of pure colour are far from mathematical in size or position. "I follow no system in painting; I flog the canvas with irregular strokes and let them stand. Impasts—here and there uncovered patches—overpainting—brutalities, and the result is far too disturbing and tuneless to satisfy

people who look for technique." And further on: "No photographic imitation, that is the chief thing."

But while anti-realistic, he lays continual stress on the importance of finding every motif in Nature. "One must attend more to Nature's teaching than to that of painters." The same sentiment everywhere. He pours scorn on the painters of imaginary historical scenes, on Constant, Cabanel, Jacques, applauding Courbet's question; "How can I paint angels when I have never seen one?" Art must be in touch with life, and the artist must rely on a personal interpretation of Nature. He must live the life of his models before he can really understand them.

There can be no denying the personalness of Vincent's outlook. To him landscape vibrated, lived in its every line. In that wonderful picture, "Les Blés," the corn swells like the sea and the wings of the ravens seem to writhe across the sky. In this curious twisted vision appears the tragedy of Vincent's life. Gauguin's joy in sunlight was the frank, unreasoning joy of the animal; Vincent loved it with a passion far more complex, far more fevered. With this same passion he lived his short, crowded, life and the strain of it drove that patient, tortured mind slowly into madness. He died in a lunatic asylum in 1890. He was thirty-seven years old.

And here I would close, recommending this volume of letters to any who may still regard his work as that of a madman, as also to whoever would mourn the tragedy of a noble soul.

4. THE LOGICAL SEQUENCE MUST BE PRESERVED.

Do again the exercises in Chapter III. In discussion, logical sequence is even more important than in narrative.

5. OUR IDEAS MUST BE VIVIDLY EXPRESSED.

Try to make your words, as Mr. Kipling once said, "March up and down in the hearts of men." Just as

you attempted to make your stories and your descriptions live, so try now to make your ideas become alive, strong, creative. At this point you must read. Do not imitate, but examine and criticize. Try to pull to pieces the construction of sentences which make ideas live in Mr. Kipling's books, and especially in Mr. H. G. Wells's books, "Mankind in the Making," "A Modern Utopia"; in Mr. John Masefield's book on Shakespeare; in Professor A. F. Pollard's "History of England" (these can be obtained for a shilling each or less). You must not take it that I agree with the views expressed in these books, but you must understand that I think them admirable as examples of clear, strong presentation and vivid writing.

EXERCISE VII.

(i.) The exercises in Chapter II. should be done again. (ii.) Every sentence in your essays will be an exercise in vivid presentation. (iii.) Write compositions in the form of criticisms on the vividness of the extract and article quoted in Exercise VI. (iv.) Do you understand all that is written in these articles? Every sentence? Which do you not understand? Why? Is it because they are not vividly written, or because the thoughts are badly expressed, or because they are difficult thoughts to understand?

6. THE BEGINNING MUST NOT BE IN THE FORM OF A LENGTHY PRESENTATION. WE MUST GET TO THE MATTER IN HAND AT ONCE, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

A lengthy introduction bores the reader. Instead of giving my own views at length on this matter, I will quote with approval the famous "Speech in March-Meeting," taken from the "Biglow Papers," by Russell Lowell. The English is that spoken in New England, U.S.A. You would be wrong to imitate it, but the sense of it is good. As an example of how *not* to make a speech or present a subject, it is not easily beaten :

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW'S SPEECH IN MARCH-MEETING.

I dno as speechis ever hez any argimunts to 'em; I never see none thet hed, an' I guess they never du; but tha must allus be a B'ginning to everythin' atouth it is Eternity, so I'll begin rite away, an' anybody may put it afore any of his speeches ef it soots an' welcome. I don't claim no paytent.

THE ARGYMUNT.

Interducshin, wich may be skipt. Begins by talkin' about himself: thet's jest natur an' most gin'ally allus pleasin', I b'leeve, I've notist, to *one* of the cumpany, an' thet's more than wut you can say of most speshes of talkin'. Nex' comes the gittin' the goodwill of the orjunce by lettin' 'em gether from wut you kind of ex'dentally let drop thet they air about East, A one, an' no mistaik, skare 'em up and take 'em as they rise. Spring interdooced with a fiew approprut flours. Speach finally begins witch nobuddy needn't feel obolygated to read, as I never read 'em an' never shell this one ag'in. Subjick staited; expanded; delayted; extended. Pump lively. Subjick staited ag'in, so's to avide all mistaiks. Ginule remarks; continood; kerried on; pushed furder; kind o' gin out. Subjick restaited; dielooted; stirred up permiscoous. Pump ag'in. Gits back to where he sot out. Can't seem to stay thair. Ketches into Mr. Seaward's hair. Breaks loose ag'in an' stait his subjick; stretches it; turns it; folds it; onfolds it; folds it ag'in, so's 't no one can't find it. Argoos with an imedginary bean [being] thet ain't aloud to say nothin' in repleye. Gives him a real good dressin', an' is settysfide he's rite. Gits into Johnson's hair. No use tryin' to git into his head. Gives it up. Hez to stait his subjick ag'in; doos it back'ards, sideways, eendways, criss-cross, bevellin', noways. Gits finally red on it. Concluds, concluds more. Reads some xtrax. Sees his subjick a nosin' round arter him ag'in. Tries to avide it. Wun't du.

Mis-states it. Can't conjectur' no other plawsable way of staytin' on it. Tries pump. No fx. Finely concluds to conclud. Yeels the flore.

Our first words must be of such a nature as to interest the reader. We can do this in many ways: Sometimes by a strong statement which will provoke contradiction; sometimes by a short anecdote bearing on our subject; sometimes by a short quotation bearing on our subject, or by an epigram or a paradox; sometimes by grasping the subject at once. But we must interest the reader.

EXERCISE VIII.

Write a very brief beginning to compositions on the following subjects. You are not required to write more than a brief beginning. It may be one sentence or a short paragraph from ten to thirty words in length. But in those few words or lines you must have got to your subject. Do not beat about the bush.

(i.) Barrel-organs are a nuisance. (ii.) All sparrows should be killed. (iii.) Cinematographs do not teach. (iv.) No woman ought to be allowed to work for a living.

7. THE LAST PARAGRAPH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE DISCUSSION. IT SHOULD MAKE OUR CONCLUSION CLEAR.

There is nothing more likely to weaken the effect of an essay than a last paragraph which falters or is not to the point. The last paragraph should either summarize your views and clinch the argument or make to the reader some strong recommendations in keeping with your discussion, or it should give some original idea which has arisen in your mind as you discussed, provided that idea is the natural, logical outcome of your arguments. These are a few ways of ending.

EXERCISE IX.

Imagine that you have written compositions on the subjects given in the first five exercises of this chapter.

To some of these write concluding paragraphs which will drive home your ideas on the subject in vivid sentences. Read out all you write aloud.

8. THE LAST SENTENCE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE LAST PARAGRAPH.

This arises naturally out of the previous paragraph.

EXERCISE X.

Study carefully the ends of Stevenson's Essays in "Memories and Portraits," "Virginibus Puerisque," in the "Essays of Elia" by Charles Lamb, of the leaders of any good daily papers, both halfpenny and penny; and of various sonnets. Write down how far the last sentences are good or bad in any twenty essays, articles, or sonnets; state why they are good or bad as summing up or clinching the argument or rounding off the whole, or giving some idea, original in itself, that arose naturally from the preceding matter.

9. IN OUR DISCUSSION CERTAIN POINTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS. WE MUST GIVE TO THESE POINTS MORE SPACE THAN TO OTHERS, A LONGER OR MORE FORCIBLE TREATMENT.

EXERCISE XI.

Criticize the following outlines: (a) In a criticism of a book on football, the writer has given a column to a general discussion on the game and ten lines to the book. (b) In an article in a brilliantly edited evening paper on Votes for Women, the editor has given five columns to attacking the Government, four to Tariff Reform, one to Socialism, and half a column to the Woman's Suffrage Bill. (c) In his defence of a man charged with murder, the counsel for the defence has spent three hours in adducing evidence of prisoner's high character, and twenty minutes on the charge of murder. (d) In a critique of the play "Hamlet," the writer has devoted half a column to his views of people who think Bacon is Shakespeare, half a column to a new and as yet untried way of stage-setting, ten lines to Hamlet, and twenty to Ophelia.

EXERCISE XII.

Write down skeleton outlines, *arranged in logical order*, and numbered, for compositions on the thirty-seven subjects (or some of them) in the first five exercises of this chapter. State to which part or parts of the composition you will give the longest or most forcible treatment, and give your reasons for your choice.

10. THE SUBJECT MUST BE MADE AS CONCRETE AS POSSIBLE.

Philosophy is not an easy subject to understand. It deals with things of the pure intellect, reasoning made spirit. Yet Professor Henri Bergson can lecture *in French* to an English audience and make them understand the most difficult ideas. How does he do it?

He does it by a constant appeal to concrete ideas, pictures, images, illustrations. Get the little English sixpenny book written about his philosophy, and study some of the examples he has given. His own books are even clearer than this little introduction to his work.

Your writing will gain enormously by concrete examples. For instance, if you are discussing a play, you should quote certain passages in support of your argument. If you are comparing English and French scenery, you should give a series of little pictures, analyze the constituent parts of those pictures, and then come to your comparison. If you are criticizing a book, give first a brief analysis of the story and of the characters.

EXERCISE XIII.

For each of the following arguments or sentences try to find some concrete illustration in the form of a story or a picture, etc. Write down your concrete illustration. (1) No large section of the community can stop work without affecting the whole community and endangering its own safety. (2) There is no such thing as a state of absolute immobility. The real thing is movement. Everything is in movement. Immobility is only apparent, and arises in the mind from the observation of two things moving in the same direction at the same

speed. (3) The proper use of poetry is to be read aloud. (4) The men who try to do something new for the most part starve. (5) Red Revolution leads almost always to a military despotism. (6) The commonest things are those which we observe least. (7) "Easy come, easy go." (8) We should feed a nation before educating it. (9) 'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good. (10) A man of character is the conscience of the society in which he moves.

SUMMARY.

A subject on which you may reasonably be supposed to have something to say has been set.

You will first think out and discuss the meaning of the subject.

You will jot down your ideas.

You will arrange these ideas in proper sequence.

You will decide upon the climax to which your arguments lead.

You will decide to which parts of your composition you will give the most forcible or the longest treatment.

You will get to your subject at once by an interesting first paragraph.

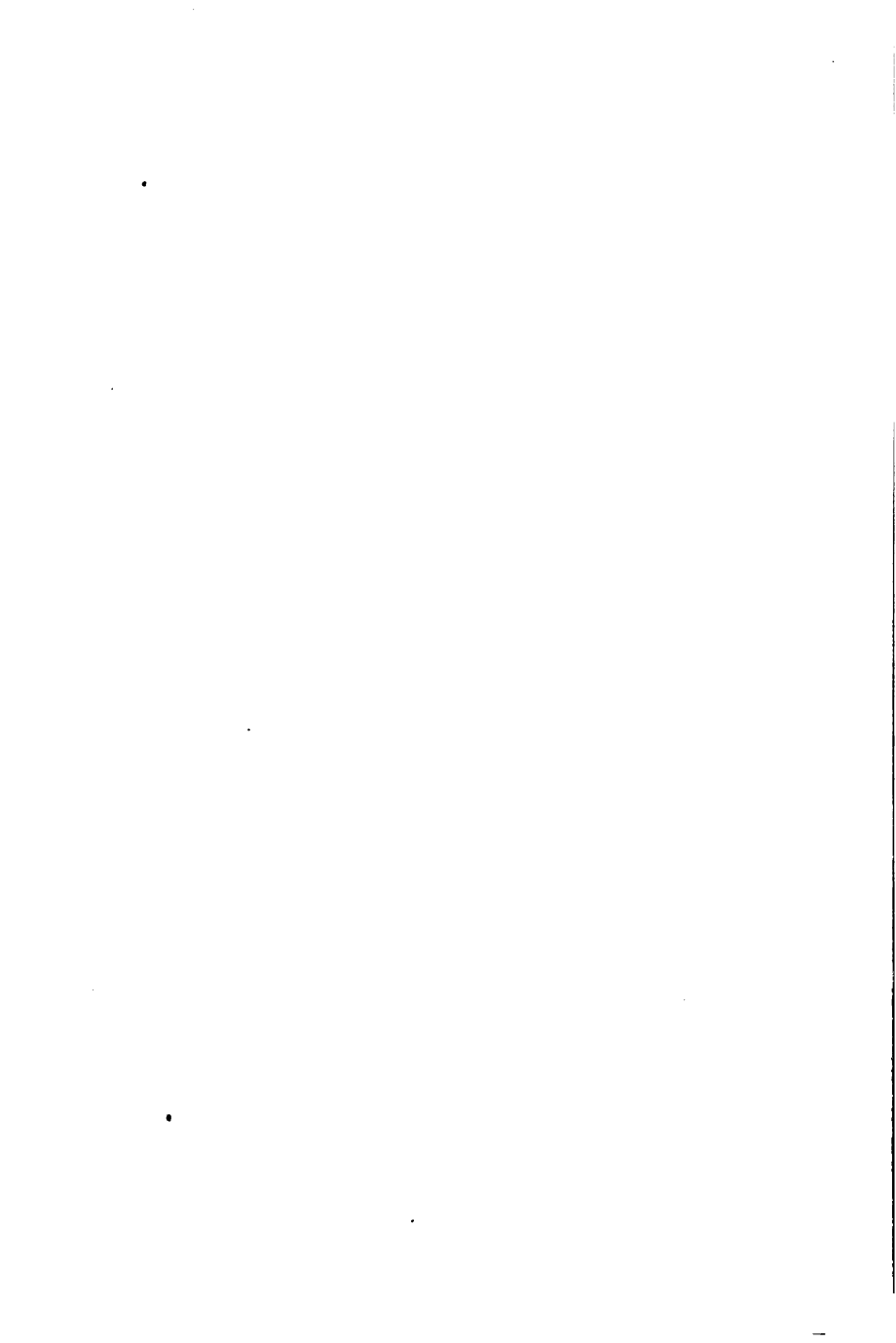
You will think out a strong, really conclusive ending.

You will then arrange good illustrations to give life to your arguments. Your writing must be vivid.

You will write your composition.

Then you will read it aloud (if possible), asking yourself constantly such questions as, "Is that true? Do I really mean that? Can I put that better? Have I brought out the meaning clearly? Am I satisfied with the balance? Have I illustrated this point? Do my arguments prove my conclusion?"

Is that all? No; there is still what some critics call "style."



CHAPTER VIII

A NOTE ON STYLE

I PROPOSE to say little about style. Since I feel that style is sincerity, all this book has been about style. Read Professor Walter Raleigh's book on "Style," R. L. Stevenson's essay on the "Art of Writing," Walter Pater's essay on "Style." Think these over, and ask yourself whether they have proved their conclusions, whether you agree or disagree, and why. There are, however, a few rules you may observe, and some more questions you must ask yourself. Go through your writing with a blue pencil, and see what you can cross out as unnecessary. Cross out those parts. Read out aloud what you have written. Does any part of it jar upon the ear? Is any of it bad English? Have you put near one another those parts of the sentence that belong to one another? Is there confusion? Is there dulness. Is there vagueness? Have you repeated words too close to one another? Do certain *sounds* come unpleasantly close together? or repeat unpleasantly? Can you improve what you have written? Beware of set phrases which have been used so often that they have become stale or commonplace, and have lost their original meaning. Beware of catchwords. Beware of the sentence which sounds pretty or clever. Is it true? Finally, ask yourself of every part and of the whole, Is this honest thinking? honest description? am I sincere? is it true? Is it true? Read the two extracts which Mr. H. G. Wells has permitted me to reproduce from his book "The New Machiavelli." Read them aloud critically. Read them for the style, the power, the

picture-making, the appeal to your own memories. Do not imitate them. If ever you want a style, it must be your own.

TWO EXTRACTS FROM "THE NEW MACHIAVELLI,"
BY H. G. WELLS.

(Reprinted with the Author's express permission.)

FLOOR-GAMES.

My games upon the floor must have spread over several years, and developed from small beginnings, incorporating now this suggestion, and now that. They stretch, I suppose, from seven to eleven or twelve. I played them intermittently, and they bulk now in the retrospect far more significantly than they did at the time. I played them in bursts, and then forgot them for long periods; through the spring and summer I was mostly out of doors, and school and classes caught me early. And in the retrospect I see them all, not only magnified and transfigured, but foreshortened and confused together. A clockwork railway, I seem to remember, came and went; one or two clockwork boats; toy sailing-ships that, being keeled, would do nothing but lie on their beam ends on the floor; a detestable lot of cavalymen, undersized and gilt all over, given me by a maiden aunt, and very much what one might expect from an aunt, that I used as Nero used his Christians, to ornament my public buildings; and I finally melted some into fratricidal bullets, and therewith blew the rest to flat splashes of lead by means of a brass cannon in the garden.

I find this empire of the floor much more vivid and detailed in my memory now than many of the owners of the skirts and legs and boots that went gingerly across its territories. Occasionally, alas! they stooped to scrub, abolishing in one universal destruction the slow growth of whole days of civilized development. I still remember the hatred and disgust of these catastrophes. Like Noah, I was given warnings. Did I disregard

them, coarse red hands would descend, plucking garrisons from fortresses and sailors from ships, jumbling them up in their wrong boxes, clumsily, so that their rifles and swords were broken, sweeping the splendid curves of the Imperial Road into heaps of ruins, casting the jungle growth of Zululand into the fire.

"Well, Master Dick," the voice of this cosmic calamity would say, "you ought to have put them away last night. No! I can't wait until you've sailed them all away in ships. I got my work to do, and do it I will."

And in no time all my continents and lands were swirling water and swiping strokes of house-flannel.

THE KNIFE.

The knife, as I remember it, was a particularly jolly one, with all sorts of instruments in it—tweezers and a thing for getting a stone out of the hoof of a horse, and a corkscrew; it had cost me a carefully accumulated half-crown, and amounted, indeed, to a new experience in knives. I had it for two or three days, and then one afternoon I dropped it through a hole in my pocket on a footpath crossing a field between Penge and Anerley. I heard it fall in the way one does without at the time appreciating what had happened; then later, before I got home, when my hand wandered into my pocket to embrace the still dear new possession, I found it gone, and instantly that memory of something hitting the ground swam up into consciousness. I went back and commenced a search. Almost immediately I was accosted by the leader of a little gang of four or five extremely dirty and ragged boys of assorted sizes and slouching carriage, who were coming from the Anerley direction.

"Lost anythink, matey," said he.

I explained.

"'E's dropped 'is knife," said my interlocutor, and joined in the search.

"What sort of 'andle was it, matey?" said a small, white-faced, sniffing boy in a big bowler hat.

I supplied the information. His sharp little face scrutinized the ground about us.

"Got it," he said, and pounced.

"Give it 'ere," said the big boy hoarsely, and secured it.

I walked towards him, serenely confident that he would hand it over to me, and that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

"No bloomin' fear!" he said, regarding me obliquely.

"Oo said it was your knife?"

Remarkable doubts assailed me. "Of course it's my knife," I said. The other boys gathered round me.

"This ain't your knife," said the big boy, and spat casually.

"I dropped it just now."

"Findin's keepin's, I believe," said the big boy.

"Nonsense," I said. "Give me my knife."

"'Ow many blades it got?"

"Three."

"And what sort of 'andle?"

"Bone."

"Got a corkscrew like?"

"Yes."

"Ah! This ain't your knife no'ow. See?"

He made no offer to show it me. My breath went.

"Look here!" I said. "I saw that kid pick it up. It is my knife."

"Rot!" said the big boy, and slowly, deliberately, put my knife into his trouser pocket.

I braced my soul for battle. All civilization was behind me, but I doubt if it kept the colour in my face. I buttoned my jacket and clenched my fists, and advanced on my antagonist. He had, I suppose, the advantage of two years of age and three inches of height.

"Hand over that knife," I said.

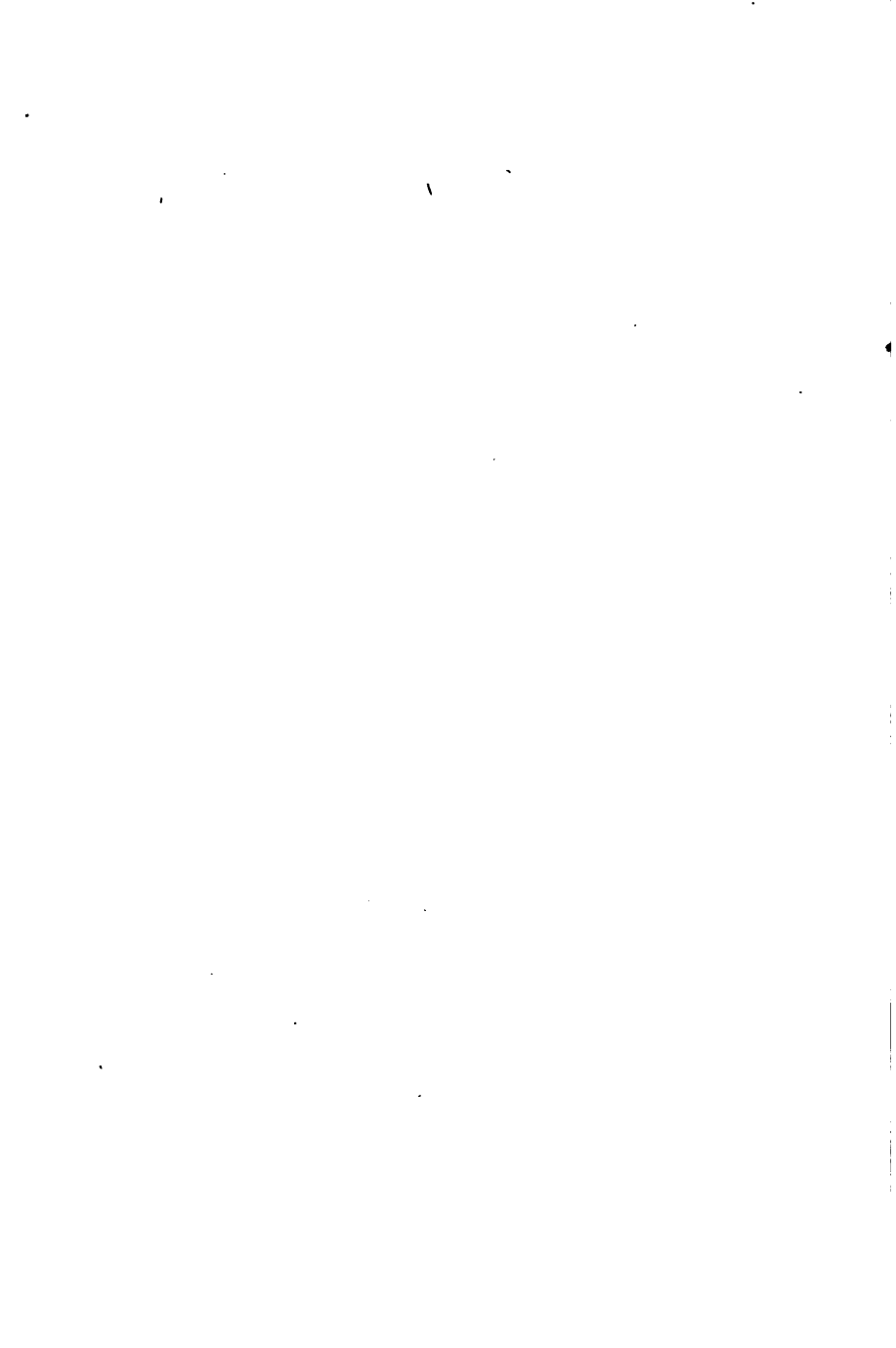
Then one of the smallest of the band assailed me with extraordinary vigour and swiftness from behind, had an arm round my neck and a knee in my back before I had the slightest intimation of attack, and so got me down. "I got 'im, Bill," squeaked this amazing

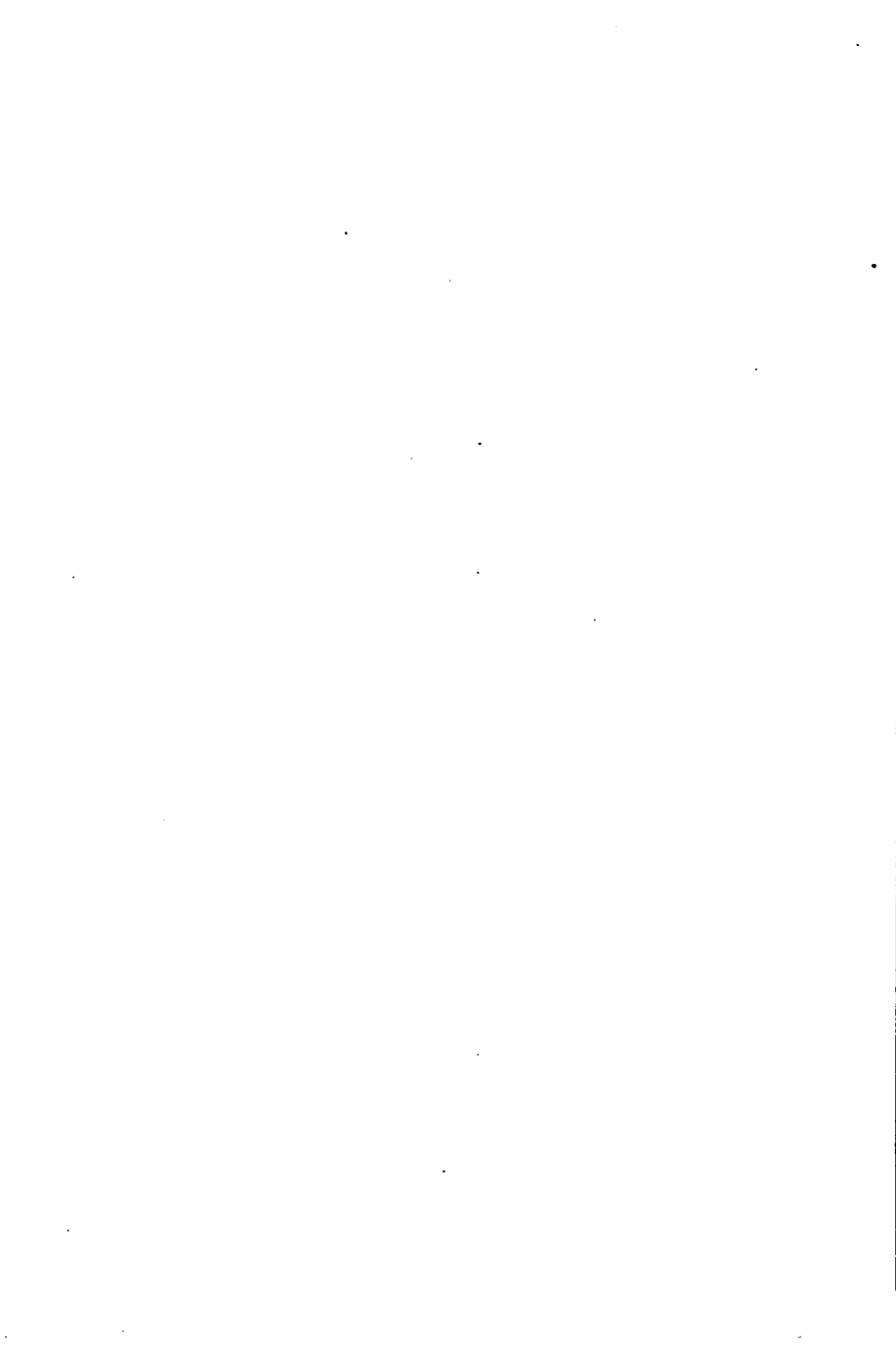
little ruffian. My nose was flattened by a dirty hand, and as I struck out and hit something like sacking, someone kicked my elbow. Two or three seemed to be at me at the same time. Then I rolled over, and sat up to discover them all making off, a ragged flight, footballing my cap—my City Merchants' cap—among them.

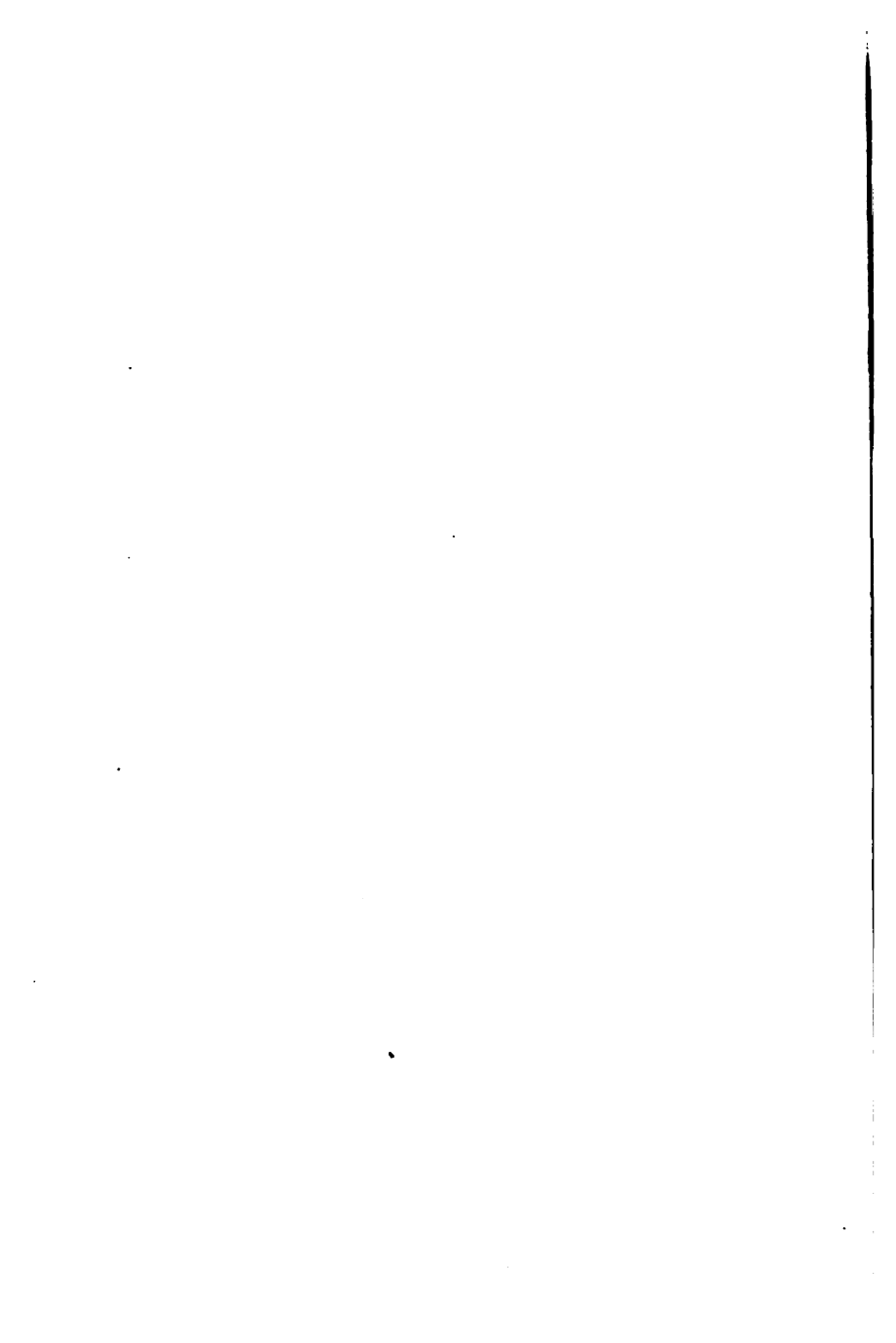
ADDENDUM ON STYLE

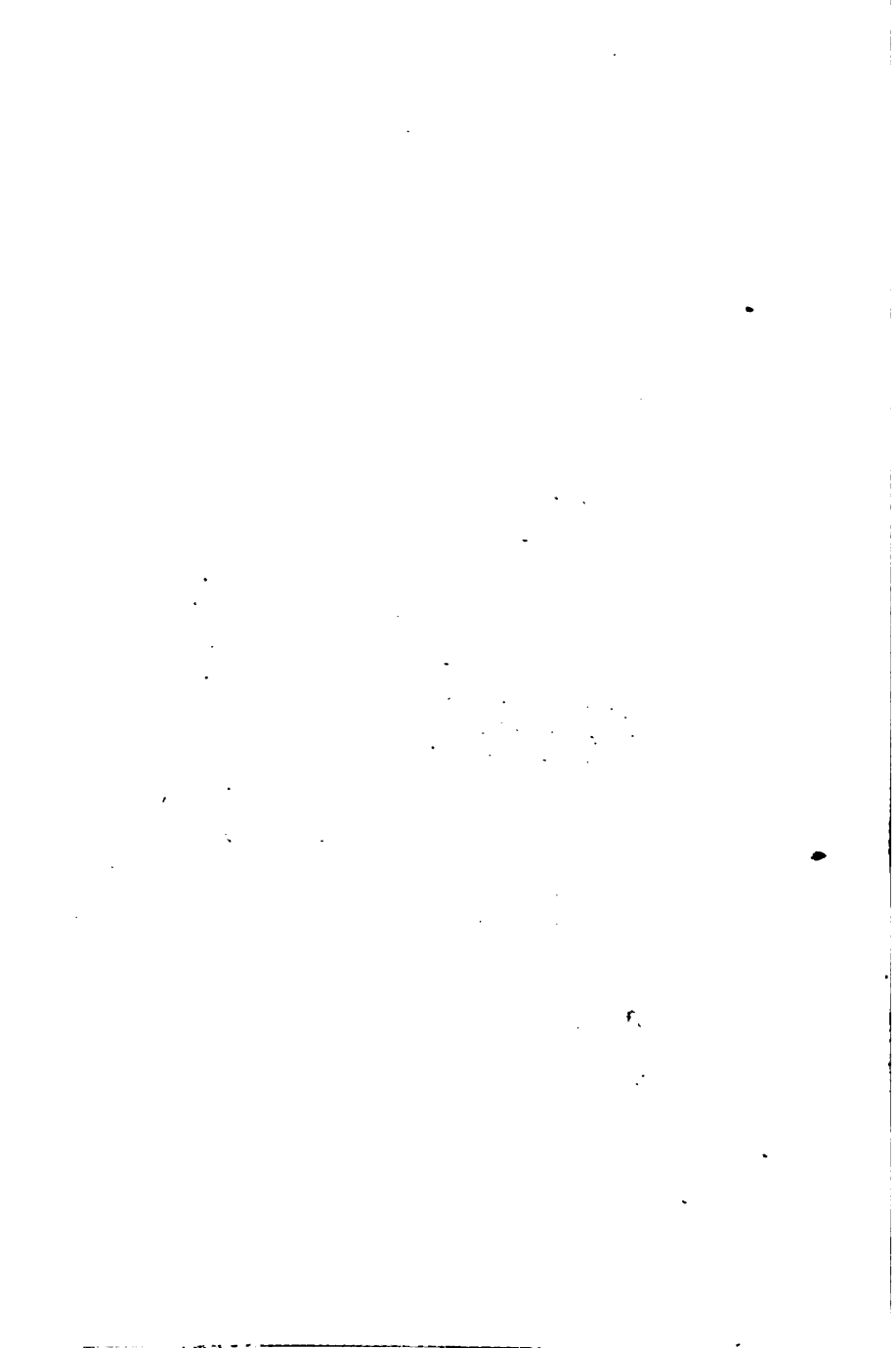
A critic calls Mr. Wells a powerful but *loose* writer. What do you think he means? Do you agree with him?

All writers may be divided into two kinds: the classical and the democratic. The first have fed their minds on the great Greek and Latin authors and on their imitators. Their style shows the influence. It is polished and impersonal. The second are impatient of restraint; to them Life, surging like the sap in spring, means everything; they let their personality speak far more than do the classical writers. The style of the latter is cold, that of the democratic writers is hot with energy. Is it possible to find a middle way, where the style shall be of yourself, but finished and smooth? In the last resort no one can teach you, many may criticize, but the most severe, the most delicate judge of an artist's work must be the artist himself. From one's artistic conscience there is no escape.









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